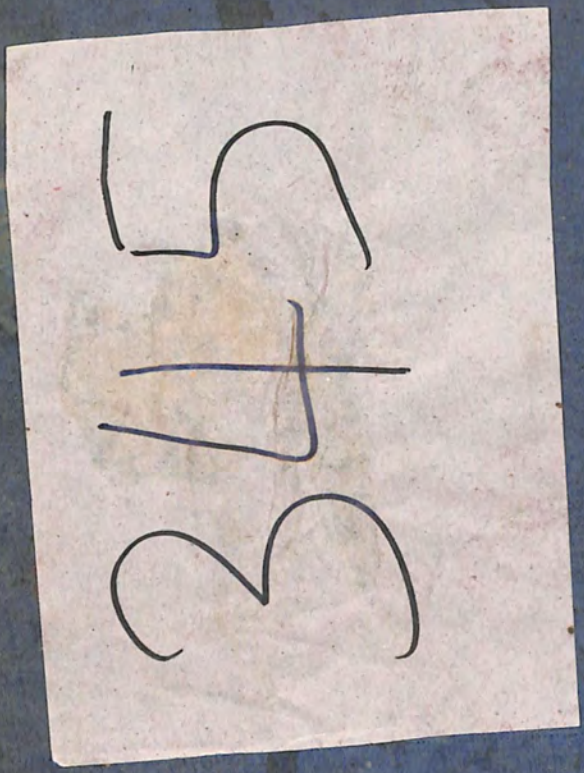

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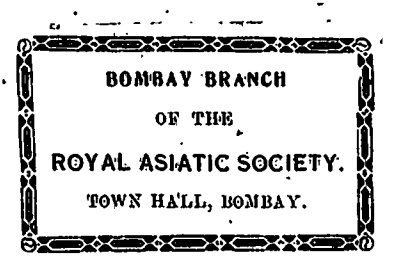

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THE

PRESENT STATE

COLOMBIA;

CONTAINING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS OF ITS REVOLUTIONARY WAR; THE EXPEDITIONS FITTED OUT IN ENGLAND TO ASSIST IN ITS EMANCIPATION;

ITS CONSTITUTION; FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL LAWS; REVENUE EXPENDITURE AND PUBLIC DEBT; AGRICULTURE, MINES; MINING AND OTHER ASSOCIATIONS;

WITH

A MAP,

EXHIBITING ITS MOUNTAINS, RIVERS, DEPARTMENTS AND PROVINCES

BY AN OFFICER,

LATE IN THE COLOMBIAN SERVICE.

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LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

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THE PRESENT STATE

OF

COLOMBIA.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction—Classification of Colonies—Oppression of Spanish Colonies—Comparison between Colonies of England and Spain—Attempts of Miranda—Revolution in Venezuela—Earthquake at Caraccas—Death of Miranda—Revolutionary War—Morillo—His sanguinary conduct—Battles of Bargas and Boyacá—Armistice—Battle of Carabobo—Capture of Maracaybo—Bolivar.

The recent events in Colombia, which threaten to disturb the tranquillity of that infant state, have excited general apprehensions of a renewal of those intestine feuds which disgraced the commencement of her struggle for independence. When we consider that all the states which have risen upon the ruin of the Spanish power in the western hemisphere have, without a single exception, the moment they had shaken off the yoke of foreign oppression, fallen a prey to domestic discord, it must be confessed that such

fears are not altogether without foundation, and that these early dissensions afford an unfavourable augury of their future repose and prosperity. In addition also to the general sympathy felt on this subject, a peculiar degree of anxiety has been excited by the late events, in the minds of a numerous class of persons in this country, who have acquired a painful interest in the future fate of that portion of the globe, by the risk, or as in the present moments of alarm it is very generally feared, by the sacrifice of the considerable sums which they have either embarked in speculations, or vested in loans to the Colombian government, in reliance on its good faith and the sufficiency of its resources.

Having been a resident for some years in Colombia, and an eye-witness of some of the principal events of the revolution, I have had opportunities of visiting a considerable part of the country, and of forming some estimate of its natural riches and of the character of the persons who have raised themselves to power during the revolutionary struggle; and believing, notwithstanding the present unfavourable aspect of its affairs, that it possesses the means of extricating itself from the difficulties in which it is involved, I propose, in the following pages, to offer a brief sketch, as well of the contest which

has terminated so gloriously for Colombia, as of her present political and financial situation, and to deduce from it such remarks as suggest themselves in support of the opinion I have formed.

Many publications have already appeared since the commencement of the revolution in Colombia, professing to give an account of that event, and of the general state of the country: but, with a single exception, they are either the narratives of persons who left Europe for the purpose of affording their aid in her contest for independence, and who returned disgusted with the difficulties they encountered, or the itineraries of travellers, who have thought it would be interesting and important to their fellow-countrymen to be made acquainted with

> ——— the most disastrous chances,
> The moving accidents, by flood and field,

which they have met with in their wanderings through this land of perils and of wonder; these writings are not without interest, but they do not, I think, convey to the people of this country the information which is necessary to enable them to form a correct estimate of the present condition of Colombia. Whether I shall succeed better in the attempt must be left to the judgment of the reader, but he may at least rely on the accuracy of the facts which I shall detail,

as, where they have not fallen under my personal observation, they have been received from friends on whose intelligence and veracity I can place implicit reliance.

An eminent modern writer, whose works exhibit a profound knowledge of the theory and practice of colonization, lays it down as an axiom, that "the independence of colonies is innate; that it arises from the natural order of things, and is the necessary consequence of their arriving at a certain degree of maturity." He proceeds upon the principle, that every colony has three ages; viz. of infancy, of youth, and of manhood, and that this latter is naturally that of separation. In a subsequent part of his work, he asserts that strength, and not time, is the measure of age. These propositions seem to imply a contradiction; for, unless the term colony is employed in a much more restricted sense than that in which it is usually received, it must be evident that many of these establishments can never attain the age of manhood. The colonies which formerly belonged, or do still belong, to the different powers of Europe, may be divided into three classes; the first of which will comprehend those countries which, from their extent and riches, are capable of giving birth and support to a population sufficient for their own future

defence: such were the United States of America when British colonies, the Spanish colonies in both the Americas, and Brazil; and such are, at present, the British possessions in India, Canada, and New South Wales. The second class will include those colonies which are suitable to commercial purposes, but which contain no commanding position, either for their own protection or that of the general interests of the parent state, and which are not of sufficient extent to produce a population capable of their own defence. Such, with perhaps the exception of Cuba, are all the islands of the Caribbean sea, and the greater part of those in the Indian and Mediterranean seas. The third class will consist of those possessions which, being either islands or insulated positions of strength, are occupied by the parent state for the purpose of protecting its commerce, and maintaining its ascendancy in the neighbouring seas; such are Malta, Corfu, Gibraltar, and the Cape of Good Hope. It must be evident that the two latter of these classes can never be in a situation to maintain their independence; they consequently can never attain the age of manhood, as defined by M. de Pradt. All the states, however, of the vast American continent which have separated themselves from the mother country and established their independence, are com-

prehended in the first of these classes; they afford us, therefore, ample means of applying these general principles.

The admirable superstructure which has been raised in the western hemisphere, on the firm basis of British colonization, is as yet the only instance of their successful and complete operation, and it is the model which has been adopted for imitation by the states which formerly acknowledged the supremacy of Spain. As their future condition, however, depends materially on their capability of adapting their previous habits and opinions to the institutions of freedom, it is of importance to trace their progress in the different stages of colonial existence through which they have already passed, and, by considering the circumstances which have tended to develop or repress their natural energies, to determine whether they have assumed their present attitude in consequence of having attained the age of colonial maturity, or whether adventitious circumstances have stimulated them to a precocious exhibition of strength.

The first settlers in the Spanish colonies were the bold and enterprising adventurers who had achieved the conquest of those countries. Accustomed to the habits of carelessness and dissipation induced by a life of continued hardship and

danger, they had neither industry to cultivate the soil, nor patience to await the slow returns of commerce. Incited by the desire of immediate wealth, the precious metals were the only objects of their search, the only stimulants to their activity. The government of Spain, imitating the example of its subjects, and allured by the dazzling prospects of wealth thus suddenly unfolded to its view, claimed a portion of the spoil, and encouraged, by its regulations, the continuance of a system so lucrative to the individuals immediately concerned in it, but so detrimental to the general interests of both the conquerors and the conquered. The whole system of the colonial policy of Spain originated in this spirit, and the restrictions and disabilities under which the colonies so long laboured, were the result of the rapacity and jealousy which it engendered.

The Spaniards found the inhabitants of the countries they invaded collected n populous cities and considerably advanced in civilization. A mild system of treatment might have converted them into faithful allies, or useful dependents: but, instead of attempting any conciliatory measures, they attacked them without provocation, and sacrificed them without remorse. Those who escaped the sword were made use of as the

implements of avarice, with such an unfeeling and prodigal barbarity, that they sank under the hardships imposed upon them, with a rapidity which astonished even their ruthless oppressors. In the islands, not a vestige of the original inhabitants remains: and it is probable that many regions of the continent suffered the same extreme of depopulation, as the insatiable thirst of their new masters for the precious metals subjected them to severer tasks, and labours more destructive to the human frame. Occasional symptoms of remorse were, indeed, exhibited by the Spanish government; and, in the moments of compunction, regulations dictated by humanity were framed for the protection of the wretched natives: but in regions so remote from the seat of legislation, these salutary laws became too often ineffectual, when opposed to the interests of the resident oppressor.

The Spanish government founded its claims to its new possessions on the right of conquest. Equally regardless of their interests and their distresses, it parcelled them out amongst the conquerors; and, eager to make them subservient to the immediate purposes of revenue, claimed a portion of the profits of the new possessor, and exacted from the wretched native a

tribute, wrung from the hard-earned wages of his toil.

The effects produced upon the colonies by commercial restrictions were also equally unfavourable to the dependencies of Spain. The principle of exclusive trade was, till very lately, considered as the essence of a colonial establishment; and, although necessity might in some instances extort a relaxation of its rigour, it long formed a prominent feature in the colonial system of every European power. This was considered as the price paid by the colony for the protection and support of the parent state: it is, undoubtedly, injurious to the colony, and will, where it exists, eventually form one of the most powerful motives for separation; but its influence may be modified by a variety of circumstances, which have a tendency to mitigate the severity of its operation. As the value of the colony depends, not only on the quantity of its own actual produce, but also on that of the produce or of the manufactures of the mother country, of which it is the consumer, and of the production of which it becomes by its demand an efficient cause, it is evident, that the mutual interest of both parties requires the extent of the colonies to be proportioned to the industry of the mother country, as well as to its means

of affording them protection. If this be not the case, the wants of the colony, where the restrictive system prevails, will be either scantily supplied, or the price of the articles they require will be greatly enhanced by the circuitous channel through which they have to pass, and the monopolies to which they will be subjected in their course.

It is owing to this cause that the system of colonization has been so much more beneficial to England than to any other nation of Europe. The demands made upon her industry have been at all times answered with a promptitude equal to their extent, and have proved a fruitful source of her internal riches and prosperity: her colonies have likewise reaped an equal benefit from the connexion, by the ready market which she opened to their produce, and the ample supply she afforded them of every article of necessity or luxury.

When Spain first acquired possession of her American settlements, she was the only manufacturing country in Europe, and the produce of her industry was sufficient to answer their growing demand, and to purchase the commodities which flowed in upon her from the newly-discovered world. It might have been expected that her population, invigorated by this recipro-

cation of advantage, would have increased in number and in wealth, in proportion with the growth of her colonies, and that her government would have received as great an increase of strength and power from these acquisitions as other states have derived from a similar source.

In little more, however, than a century from the first discovery of America, Spain exhibited a spectacle which demonstrated to the world how little a sudden influx of wealth conduces to the greatness and prosperity of a kingdom, if unaccompanied by corresponding habits of industry among its people.

The monarchs who succeeded to the throne, without inheriting the genius, of Charles V., elated by the notion of their inexhaustible resources, engaged in extensive and complicated operations in every part of Europe, and Spain was drained both of her population and her treasure in support of the extravagant schemes of their ambition.

Her manufacturers likewise became dissatisfied with that moderate increase of wealth which flows gradually from the patient and persevering exertions of industry, and flocked with eagerness to those regions from whence opulence issued in so copious a stream.

To complete the exhaustion of the kingdom,

and the annihilation of its domestic trade, the impolitic decree of Philip III. expelled at once nearly a million of his most industrious artisans, at a time when every exertion was necessary to increase their numbers and renovate their vigour.

Such was the paralyzation of Spain from these causes, that every species of internal industry was neglected, and she was unable to supply the demands of her colonies without having recourse to the manufactures of other nations. From that moment she ceased to be any thing more than the agent through whose hands the precious metals were distributed, to reward the activity and industry of her rivals. The consequence of this system of things to Spain herself has been sufficiently manifest; she now exhibits not a trace of that gigantic power which once prescribed laws to the different courts of Europe,—"*inclytum et notum olim, nunc tantum auditur**." Its effects upon her colonies have been still more deleterious, for when the reciprocity of benefit which can alone make the restrictive system tolerable had ceased, she imposed upon them penal and sanguinary laws of utter seclusion. Jealous of the interference of other nations, she wished to make herself the sole medium of intercourse between these extensive regions and the

* Tac. de Mor. Ger.

rest of the universe. To effect this, it was necessary to fetter the mind as well as the body, to add the chains of ignorance to those of despotism, and the colonies were impoverished, oppressed, and degraded, to prevent them from acquiring a knowledge of their own importance in the scale of creation.

This line of conduct alienated still further the affections of the colonists; but the very acts of despotism and oppression, which were calculated to excite the desire of separation, retarded likewise the progress of information, and prolonged the period of their infancy. It cannot, however, be supposed that these extensive possessions could be completely closed against the intrusion of more liberal ideas. The introduction of the gross materials of commerce may, indeed, be prevented by fiscal regulations, but the subtle elements of intellectual light will elude the utmost vigilance of despotism. A new class of men had sprung into existence in these countries, whose energetic character formed a striking contrast to the listless apathy of the native Indian. The Creole descendants of the original settlers, and of other European emigrants, began now to form a considerable part of the population; and the system of colonial administration adopted by Spain pressed with peculiar severity upon this class

of her subjects. Some modification of it was therefore necessary to adapt it to this change of circumstances, but she persisted in a pertinacious adherence to her established maxims of extortion and oppression.

It is well observed by M. de Pradt, that "Europe has no interest in any population that has not European habits; and that she should apply herself, in her colonial discoveries, to multiply European population and European habits." It is, therefore, to the Creole race, that we must look for the supply of those materials of future independence, which will be beneficial to the colony, and render it permanently valuable to the parent state. So long as the colonial union continues to subsist, the Creole forms the firmest support of the power and interests of the mother country; and when the period arrives that sovereignty is exchanged for commercial intercourse, the habits which he has acquired and diffused constitute the strongest bond of future connexion. Justice and policy combine, therefore, to demand for him liberality of treatment, and a participation in the power and wealth of his native land. But so jealous was the court of Madrid of encouraging any symptoms of independence in her colonies, that for a long time every situation of trust and emolument was invariably filled by Eu-

ropeans, and the descendants of this favoured race, if born in those proscribed regions, seemed from that circumstance alone to have forfeited all claim to the favour and protection of their government.

Every thing, therefore, conspired to render the dominion of Spain unprofitable and burdensome to her colonies: their commerce was not only restricted to the mother country, but was still further fettered by the monopolies granted to particular cities and companies of merchants; they were compelled to accept for their own produce whatever the monopolist thought proper to offer, and to proportion the quantity of it to the scanty demand, rather than to their capability of production. At the same time, they were obliged to pay for European merchandise any price demanded by the privileged vender, and they were even then but imperfectly supplied, as it became the interest of the merchant to create an artificial scarcity, for the purpose of exacting a more exorbitant profit. The articles of European commerce, therefore, came to them so dear that they could afford to purchase but little, and at the same time their own agriculture was kept in a state of the most abject depression for want of encouragement. The weight of these burdens was likewise rendered still more insupportable

by the excessive tax levied by the crown on the importation of every article of foreign manufacture.

As the population of the colonies increased, Spain found it necessary to adopt stronger measures, and greater precautions, for the preservation of her power, and their operation still farther multiplied the causes of dissatisfaction. By such means, the seeds of discontent were disseminated over the whole of these vast regions, and required only a genial season to promote their vegetation, and raise from them the fruits of emancipation and independence.

Circumstances at length occurred, which aroused their slumbering energies, and stimulated them to exertion and resistance. The French revolution, that fruitful source of so many temporary changes in the governments of Europe, afforded by its consequences the requisite opportunity, and the convulsive shock which has subverted the power of Spain, was felt simultaneously throughout the whole extent of her continental dominions in the West.

This effect was not produced by the influence of the political tenets which characterized that eventful period, for they gained little admission amongst the Spanish colonists, but resulted merely from the removal of those impediments

which had hitherto obstructed the operation of the natural causes of colonial separation. The hopeless war with Great Britain, in which Spain was involved at the instigation of her imperious neighbour, interrupted her intercourse with her colonies; and subsequent events proved so disastrous to her marine, that she lost the power of affording them further protection: they were, therefore, driven to a reliance on their own resources for defence, and were not long in discovering that the same strength which enabled them to resist the aggressions of a foreign foe would likewise protect them from the oppression of domestic despotism.

The discoveries of Columbus, and the conquests of his adventurous successors, gave these extensive and opulent regions to the dominion of Spain when she was in the zenith of her political power: and such was then her flourishing condition, that she was enabled at once to erect the immense fabric of her colonial establishment, throughout its vast extent. Within fifty years of its foundation, it was complete in all its parts; and till within the last twenty years, the condition of the colonies has been little changed during the lapse of the three centuries which have intervened since that period.

Spain was at that time the most warlike, as

well as the most polished, nation of Europe; but, inflated with ideas of her own importance and perfection, she reposed upon her grandeur; and having herself been ever since stationary, or rather retrograde, in the general march of intellectual improvement, her colonies were not likely to make more rapid progress, sedulously excluded as they were from intercourse with the world, by the extreme jealousy of her restrictive system.

The foundation of the first of the late British colonies on the same continent was laid fifty years subsequently to the completion of the Spanish system; and they have now, for more than half a century, enjoyed the blessings of independence, and have already attained a political importance, which enables them to assume a station in the foremost rank of nations. This superior rapidity in their progress towards colonial maturity is to be attributed to the difference of the materials which composed the elementary principles of the population and power of the colonies of the two nations, rather than to any superiority in the means of Spain to retain her colonies in subjection.

The British settlers approached the theatre of the future greatness of their posterity, bearing the olive-branch of peace: their only instruments of conquest were the axe and the plough;

they sought not to oppress or subjugate the native occupant of the soil—who received them in the arms of friendship, and, quietly receding into his boundless forests, left them undisturbed possession of the country necessary for their subsistence. They were men of independent spirit and industrious habits, who, discontented with the religious or political institutions of their native country, sought greater freedom in the asylum of these uncultivated deserts, where they became at once the proprietors and cultivators of the soil. The government soon perceived the value of these possessions; and, fostering their infancy with a liberality worthy of a free and enlightened people, left them, in a great measure, unrestrained in the regulations of their internal policy, and drew from them such financial advantages only as resulted from an extension of her commerce.

At length their own maturity, rather than the attempt at encroachment by the mother-country on what they considered their political rights, prompted them to the resistance which terminated in the establishment of their independence: and the institutions in which they had, from their infancy, been trained, rendered the transition easy and imperceptible, from the mild and parental

government which had fostered their tender age by the wholesome exercise of its authority, to that republican form, in which the full vigour and strength of their constitution has been displayed.

From this view of the different means employed in the first establishment of the colonies of the two countries, and of the different treatment which they received from the parent state, it is evident that we cannot refer to the present prosperity of the United States, and deduce from analogy any conclusions respecting the future condition of the late Spanish colonies. It must be recollected, that the latter have much to do before they can arrive at the point from which the Anglo-Americans set out, and that before they can even form a proper estimate of the advantages of the system they seem inclined to adopt, they must divest themselves of their previous habits and opinions, and substitute others of which they have hitherto had no experience. Their progress will, necessarily, be slow; they have chased the persons of their oppressors from their soil, but they still, in too many instances, retain their institutions and their prejudices. It will be a difficult task to eradicate the fixed and deeply-rooted prejudices of the present race; nor

can, till a new generation has sprung up, the emancipation of these countries be considered as complete.

The foregoing observations apply equally to all the states which have been raised upon the ruins of the Spanish dominion in the Western world; but it is my present intention to apply them only to Colombia, and I shall proceed to give some account of such of the leading events of the revolution, and of the subsequent proceedings of the existing government, as may afford data for forming an opinion of the present condition and future prospects of that country.

The *Voyage aux Régions Équinoctiales* of M. de Humboldt contains so complete and accurate an account of the statistics and physical phenomena of Colombia, that nothing remains to be added to the observations of that intelligent and scientific writer. I shall, therefore, only refer to his work, whenever I may have occasion to mention the subjects on which he has so ably treated. Such part of its political history previous to the revolution as is not contained in the general observations already made on the condition of the Spanish colonies is uninteresting, and may be comprised in very few words. Previous to their separation from the parent state, the countries now forming the

Republic of Colombia were divided into two separate governments, viz. the Captain-Generalship of Caraccas, and the Viceroyalty of New Granada; the former of these divisions comprised the provinces of Guayana, New Andalusia, New Barcelona, Caraccas, Coro, Varinas, and Maracaybo, extending over a surface of 47,856 square leagues, and according to a census taken in 1778, containing a population of 900,000 persons; and the latter included the remainder of the territory of the present Republic, and was at that time subdivided into the Audiences of Santa Fé and of Quito—it contained 64,520 square leagues, and 1,279,440 inhabitants.

Venezuela, the general name given to the seven provinces composing the Captain-Generalship of Caraccas, was first visited by Columbus in his third voyage, but no great progress was made in its colonization till about the middle of the sixteenth century, and it was even then considered of such little importance, that it was mortgaged to a company of German merchants, the Welsers of Augsburg, in payment of a debt incurred by the government of Spain. These avaricious adventurers, after having ruined the province by their extortion and cruelty, again abandoned it to its former masters; but as, although it is not destitute of the precious

metals, their existence was either at that time little known, or it was not supposed to contain them in sufficient quantity to repay the expense of their extraction, it was still neglected by the Spaniards, and considered as one of their most worthless possessions. Being thus left, in some measure, to its own exertions, its attention was directed to agricultural pursuits, to which the fertility of its soil and the temperature of the climate are admirably adapted; and in a short time it succeeded in establishing a valuable branch of trade, in the exchange of its produce for the merchandise of Europe with the inhabitants of the neighbouring islands.

The jealousy of Spain being at length excited by its increasing prosperity, she attempted to interdict this commerce; and finding her efforts ineffectual, resorted to the expedient of intrusting its management to the vigilance of an exclusive company of merchants, under whose direction it continued to languish, till a short time previous to the period, when, as has been before observed, the distracted state of Europe put an end to the connexion between Spain and her foreign possessions. The rough treatment and neglect, however, which this colony experienced in its infancy, had no prejudicial effect upon its growth, but rather, by the opportunity thus

afforded of a freer intercourse with foreigners, brought it to a degree of civilization and colonial maturity, which induced it early to form projects of resistance to the tyrannical mandates of the court of Spain.

The coast of New Granada was also visited by Columbus in his third and fourth voyages; but the subjection and colonization of this state was effected by Quesada, who, landing with seven hundred men, at Santa Martha, in 1536, ascended the river Magdalena, and took possession of Bogotá, at that time the capital of an Indian nation, which had attained some degree of civilization. The metallic treasures of this country soon engaged the cupidity of the Spaniards, and it was visited with that kind of notice and protection by which Spain so long fettered and repressed the energies of those which she considered her most valuable provinces.

Revolutionary symptoms manifested themselves in Venezuela, so early as the middle of the last century, and different attempts at insurrection were made at Caraccas; they, however, failed of success, and many of the principals engaged in them fell victims to their temerity. It was reserved for Miranda, a native of Caraccas, who has acquired deserved celebrity, by the zeal and activity which he exerted in his country's cause,

to which he devoted and ultimately sacrificed his life, to lay the foundation of that resistance which has at length succeeded in triumphing over every difficulty and obstacle. He was engaged early in life in devising plans for the liberation of his country; and aware of the advantage to be derived from the countenance and assistance of one of the great maritime powers of Europe, he, some time previous to the breaking out of the French Revolution, applied to the English minister, and solicited his support of the projected enterprise.

Mr. Pitt seems ever to have entertained a favourable opinion of South America, and to have expected that the commerce of England would derive considerable advantage from the establishment of its independence. He listened, therefore, with attention, to the proposals of Miranda, and, as England was at that time at variance with Spain, held out to him hopes of assistance. The disputes between the two countries being, however, at that time amicably settled, the execution of Miranda's project was postponed. At several subsequent periods of Mr. Pitt's administration, and after his death, similar proposals were made by Miranda to the British ministers, and promises of support were made or withheld, accordingly as it was the in-

terest of England to desire the elevation or depression of the power of Spain. At length the attempt of Napoleon to complete the overthrow of the dynasty of the Bourbons, by expelling its remaining branch from the throne of Spain, and the assistance afforded by England to prevent the subjugation of the Peninsula, rendered her unwilling any longer to countenance the separation of the South American colonies from the mother-country, and all hopes of assistance from that quarter were lost.

During the progress of these negociations with England, similar overtures were made to some other powers; and during the presidency of Mr. Adams, Miranda had hopes that the United States might be induced to assist the projected attempt, but the constitution of that country forbidding the employment of her forces on objects not connected with her own defence, obstacles were raised, by which his expectations were again frustrated. The persons who composed the French republican government, in 1792, at which time Miranda was serving in the French army, under Dumourier, were also desirous to revolutionize this part of the Spanish dominions, and offered Miranda the command of an expedition, to be formed for that purpose in the French islands; but he hesitated to accept

this proposal, considering, probably, that a revolution *à la Francaise* would at that time be neither conducive to the interests nor congenial with the feelings of his countrymen.

Miranda, being thus disappointed in his hopes of foreign assistance, and left to his own resources, was induced by the solicitations of the South American exiles to form an expedition, with which he landed on the coast of Coro; in consequence, however, of not meeting with the support he had expected, and some other misfortunes, it failed, and he returned to England. Fortune at length seemed determined to reward his perseverance and enterprising spirit; for the war in which Spain was engaged, first with England, and afterwards with France, interrupted, as has been before observed, her communication with her colonies; and in all parts of her transatlantic possessions juntas were formed for the administration of their several governments: this occurred in 1808. Nothing could be more peaceable or orderly than the first proceedings of the patriots of Venezuela. When they heard of the captivity of their monarch, and the occupation of nearly the whole of Spain by a foreign force, they assembled a congress for their own government, and expressed their resolution to adhere to the mother country, and assist her so

long as she continued to maintain her independence, but to resist the attempts of France, to usurp any dominion over themselves. The Cortes, however, who had taken refuge in Cadiz, refused to admit their transatlantic brethren to a participation of the liberty for which they were themselves contending, and required that the provinces of America should remain passive and follow the fate of Spain, whatever it might be; they likewise expressed their disapprobation of the conduct of the Venezuelians, and insulted them with an impotent demonstration of hostility, by declaring their coast in a state of blockade. This treatment alienated the affections of the colonies, and induced them to resolve upon a separation from Spain *.

* The following extract from the Act of Independence, published at Caraccas in July, 1811, will convey some idea of the sentiments by which the Venezuelians were actuated :—

" Luego que se disolvieron, substituyeron y destruyeron entre si las varias formas de Gobierno de España, y que la ley imperiosa de la necesidad, dictó á Venezuela el conservarse á si misma, para ventilar y conservar los derechos de su Rey, y ofrecer un asilo á sus hermanos de Europa, contra los males que les amenazaban, se desconoció toda su anterior conducta, se variaron los principios, y se llamó insurreccion, perfidia é ingratitud, á lo mismo que sirvia de norma á los Gobiernos de España, por que ya se les cerraba la puerta al monopolio de administracion, que querian perpetuar á nombre de un Rey imaginario. A pesar de nuestras protestas, de nuestra moderacion, de nuestra generosidad; y de la inviolabilidad de

Miranda, anxious to take advantage of this movement in favour of independence, again landed in Venezuela, and a system of defence was organized to resist any aggression on the part of the Cortes or of the Spanish force, which still remained in the country, under the command of Monteverde: it was about this time that Bolivar first took a leading part in the affairs of the revolution. In 1811 a regular government was formed on the federative system; and on the 5th of July of that year the Act of Independence of the confederated provinces of Venezuela was published in Caraccas. Coro and Maracaybo were not at that time included in the Confederation, being still in the hands of the Royalists, and the point upon which their commanders had retreated. It appears that neither Miranda nor Bolivar altogether approved of the plan of this constitution; the former was at the time supposed to have views of his own which were never fully disclosed, and the latter seems on all occasions to have manifested his disapprobation of the federative form of government,

nuestros principios, contra la voluntad de nuestros hermanos de Europa, se nos declaró en estado de rebelion; se nos bloquea; se nos hostiliza; se nos envian agentes á amotinarnos unos contra otros, y se procura desacreditarnos entre todas las naciones de Europa, implorando sus auxilios para oprimirnos."

probably from the conviction that it was not suited to the actual state of the country.

In the following year the hopes of the patriots were again depressed by an awful catastrophe, which spread ruin and dismay throughout the country: on the 26th of March, 1812, the city of Caraccas was visited by a tremendous earthquake, which, in the short space of little more than a minute, destroyed the greater part of the houses and public buildings, and buried upwards of 12,000 of its inhabitants in the ruins. The extent of the destruction at Laguira was even proportionably greater than in the capital, and considerable damage was also done by it in different parts of the country. The impression made by this calamity upon the minds of a weak and superstitious people was extremely prejudicial to the independent cause; for the priests, who, with very few exceptions, were hostile to the late innovations, loudly proclaimed that the hand of Heaven was visible in this infliction, and that it was a punishment upon the country for its disloyalty, and the intercourse which, since the revolution, it had held with the heretical English.

The Republican government, which, after the destruction of the capital, had removed its seat to the city of Valencia, dreading the conse-

quences of this fanaticism of the priesthood, endeavoured, but in vain, to counteract its effects by engaging the archbishop of the province to issue a proclamation, "declaring that the divine justice had only intended to chastise immorality, and that the earthquake had no connexion with the political systems and reforms of Venezuela," (*declarar que la justicia divina á lo mas ha querido castigar á los vicios morales, sin que el terremoto tenga conexion alguna con los sistemas y reformas políticas de Venezuela.*) The clergy of Bogotá have, it appears, since the similar calamity which has recently threatened that city with destruction, evinced a disposition to imitate this conduct of their brethren in Caraccas; but, as they have now no Spanish army at hand to support their efforts, and in the last fourteen years the majority of the people have become sufficiently enlightened to despise their machinations, the public tranquillity has not on the present occasion been seriously disturbed.

The friends and partisans of Spain were not, however, at that time remiss in taking advantage of the general panic, and the Royalist generals seized the opportunity of recruiting their forces, and again advanced upon Caraccas. Miranda collected his troops to oppose them; but, amongst other circumstances which operated against him,

was the diminution his force had sustained by the loss of one of his finest regiments, consisting of eight hundred men, who were buried at Caraccas in the ruins of their barrack, where they were drawn up in readiness to attend a procession from the church, at the moment the earthquake took place. He took possession of La Cabrera, a strong pass which defends the advance to Caraccas from the western provinces; but Monteverde, the Spanish general, having discovered another defile through which he passed his troops, Miranda was under the necessity of retreating in order to cover the capital.

At this critical juncture another disaster befel the patriot cause, for Porto Cabello, a place of very considerable strength, which was held by Bolivar, who was serving with the rank of colonel in the army of Miranda, was, by the treachery of an officer who commanded the citadel, taken possession of by the Spanish prisoners confined in it, and Bolivar, not having a sufficient force to attempt its recapture, was under the necessity of evacuating the place, and embarking for Laguira. Miranda, despairing of success, and unwilling, by a continuation of the contest, to cause a useless effusion of blood, agreed to a capitulation, by which it was stipulated that no person should suffer for his political opinions,

and that permission to embark should be given to all those who might wish to withdraw from the country. Monteverde, however, basely violated the terms of the capitulation, and Miranda was arrested at Laguira, when on the eve of his departure for Europe; he was thrown into prison, and soon afterwards sent to Cadiz, where he died in confinement. Bolivar, and several other of the principal officers of Miranda, succeeded in making their escape. It may be remarked, that this gross violation of a solemn treaty by Monteverde is not the only instance of want of good faith on the part of the Spaniards which occurred during this war; it was made a part of their political creed, that "no faith was to be kept with rebels," and they availed themselves of the latitude it afforded them in two or three other remarkable instances, one of which I shall have occasion to mention.

The Royalists had thus regained military possession of the whole country, but the spirit of independence, though damped, was not extinct, and it soon recovered from the superstitious panic by which it had been depressed, and manifested itself in every part of the country not occupied by the Spanish troops. In 1813, General Mariño raised a force in the province of Cumaná, with which he was able again to make head against the Royalists; and Bolivar having obtained the command

of a body of troops from the Congress of New Granada, entered Venezuela by the side of Pamplona, and the Patriot standard was again displayed on its plains. Active hostilities were now carried on for upwards of a twelvemonth, Bolivar, Paez, Mariño, Bermudez, and Urdaneta, commanding the different divisions of the Patriot troops, and Monteverde, Cajegal, Boyes, Rosette, and Morales, those of the Spaniards. A detail of the several actions which took place would be extremely uninteresting to the English reader; it will, therefore, be sufficient to remark, that in the commencement of the campaign the Patriots were generally victorious, and Bolivar again entered Caraccas. Instead, however, of complying with the instructions of the congress of New Granada, which had intrusted him with its troops for the purpose of re-establishing the federative constitution of Venezuela, he, on the 2nd January, 1814, resigned his authority at a public convocation of the states; and on the motion of the Governor of Caraccas, seconded by the leading men of the province, a military government was proclaimed during the continuance of their present dangers, and the supreme command of all the forces of Venezuela vested in Bolivar. The Independents, however, were not able long to maintain their advantages, for Bolivar sustained two signal defeats

from Boves, at La Puerta and Ariguita, and was eventually under the necessity of evacuating the country, and embarking for Carthagena.

Humanity shudders at the detail of the horrible atrocities committed on both sides during this destructive campaign. It seems to be an undisputed fact, that the example was first set by the Royalists, but the other party were not tardy in their acts of retaliation. Not only was no quarter given in action, but the unfortunate prisoners taken in their retreat, or found scattered over the country, were either instantly massacred, or brought in to head-quarters, to be butchered, *en masse*, in cold blood; and, in numerous instances, persons confined in the different prisons, who had been arrested on account of their political opinions, underwent the same barbarous fate. One of the first instances which occurred was soon after Bolivar's descent from Pamplona, when one of his parties was defeated, and Colonel Briceño, and seven other officers, being taken prisoners, were put to death by the governor of Varinas: the population, likewise, of whole districts in the province of Varinas, and in the plains, were massacred by Boves, Rosette, and Puy, on suspicion of their favouring the cause of the Patriots, and Bolivar retaliated upon them by ordering his prisoners in Caraccas and Laguira to be put to death:

out of fourteen hundred of these unfortunate persons, eight hundred actually suffered. In the siege also of Porto Cabello, whither Monteverde had retired after a defeat, it was a common practice with both parties to place their prisoners in advance of their front rank, and thus expose them to the fire of their own friends.

The Royalists had now gained such an ascendancy, that the patriot forces, unable to stand before them, were everywhere dispersed, and their leaders either taken and executed, or obliged to fly the country. The Patriot general, Rivas, was taken prisoner and shot; Bermudez sustained a defeat from Morales, and embarked for Carthagena, and Urdaneta retreated to Cúcuta in New Granada.

Affairs were in this state in Venezuela in the commencement of 1815, when Morillo arrived from Spain. One of the results of the successes of the Allied Powers, in 1814, was the restoration of Ferdinand to the throne of Spain. Hopes were entertained on that occasion, that a reconciliation might be effected between the mother-country and her revolted colonies; and a constitution was actually framed, by which it was intended to place the inhabitants of the Colonies on an equal footing with the native Spaniards. Ferdinand, however, soon convinced his American subjects that they

had little to expect, either from his good faith or his clemency; for, instead of ratifying this instrument, he directed all the efforts of his power to enforce an absolute and unconditional submission! In return for the devotion they had shown in his cause, during his detention in France, the ungrateful monarch rewarded them with a decree, which, promising oblivion of the past, graciously permitted them to resume the chains which they had so recently shaken off. Finding them, however, averse to avail themselves of his offers on the terms proposed, he resolved to try other methods, and despatched General Morillo, at the head of ten thousand men, to support his arguments by force of arms.

Whilst these transactions were taking place in Venezuela, New Granada had been suffering considerably, both from internal dissensions and the efforts of the royalists in the western provinces. In 1808, juntas were formed in different parts of the country, and violent disputes had arisen amongst them, respecting the form to be adopted for the general government of the country. Many of them were desirous of the establishment of the federal system, whilst others preferred that of a central republican government: these differences would be perfectly uninteresting to us, did they not tend to throw some light upon the question likely

to be agitated at the present moment, in consequence of the recent conduct of Paez, by showing that this subject has been amply discussed and disputed in the early days of the struggle for independence. The principal contest, occasioned by this difference of opinion, arose between the party which had constituted itself a government, under the title of "The Congress of New Granada," consisting of a federation of the provinces of Pamplona, Tunja, Neyva, Antioquia, and Carthagena, and the Junta of Cundinamarca, which held its sittings in Santa Fé. Nariño, one of the first military and political characters of the country, espoused the cause of the latter; and they were on the point of proceeding to hostilities, when a threatened attack of the Royalists, who menaced them from the side of Quito, induced them to suspend their animosities and coalesce for mutual defence. The command of all the troops of the republic of New Granada was given to Nariño; and at the commencement of his operations, he defeated the Royalists in several engagements, and drove them out of Popayan; but at last, in the year 1814, having penetrated into Pasto, he was himself defeated and taken prisoner.

It was about this period that Bolivar, as has been before mentioned, arrived at Carthagena, after his defeat at Ariguita, and proceeding imme-

diately to Tunja, where the Congress of New Granada held its sittings, he was employed by it to subdue the refractory Junta of Cundinamarca, with whom the former dispute had been renewed; and having succeeded in that object, he was ordered to attempt the expulsion of the Royalists from Santa Martha. Three thousand men were provided for that purpose; and Castillo, the governor of Carthagena, was ordered to supply him with arms and ammunition: he, however, refused to comply with this demand, and Bolivar was proceeding to enforce the orders of the Congress, when the arrival of Morillo, who, after having left garrisons in Venezuela, had sailed in July, 1815, to lay siege to Carthagena, put an end to all further hostilities between the Patriot forces. Bolivar himself emigrated to Jamaica, and left his troops to assist Castillo in his defence.

Morillo succeeded in taking the place, after a siege of four months, during which its patriotic defenders were reduced to the greatest extremities, and he himself lost so considerable a number of his European troops, that had it not been for a body of Creoles of Venezuela, which he had brought down with him, under the command of Morales, he would have been obliged to raise the siege.

After the fall of Carthagena, there was nothing

in New Granada capable of withstanding the overwhelming force of Morillo, and he regained possession of the whole country without further opposition. In the march of this blood-thirsty tyrant from the coast to Sante Fé, his progress was everywhere fatally marked by the scenes of ruin and devastation which he left on his track, and by the blood of all those who were most distinguished by their abilities and information. In his despatch to the Spanish government, which appeared in the Cadiz Journal of the 6th January, 1816, he boasts, "that he has not left alive, in the kingdom of New Granada, a single individual of sufficient influence or talents to conduct the revolution," and expresses his determination to perform his "work in exactly the same manner that the primitive conquest was established." His success, however, was but temporary, for the principles of independence had taken too deep root to be eradicated, even by his sanguinary proscriptions.

In the mean time the active mind of Bolivar had been making the most strenuous exertions to procure the means of affording assistance to his suffering countrymen. After remaining some months in Jamaica, he proceeded to Aux Cayes, where he met with a very favourable reception from Boyer, the president of the republic of Port au-Prince, and likewise obtained considerable sup-

plies. During his short residence in Jamaica, he narrowly escaped assassination, a negro having been, according to his own confession, bribed by some Spaniards to perpetrate the atrocious deed. The miscreant stole, in the dead of night, upon the hammock which contained, as he supposed, his intended victim, and finding a person sleeping in it, plunged a dagger in his breast; it happened, however, that Bolivar had that evening changed his residence, and his unfortunate secretary, having occupied his vacant hammock, fell a sacrifice to the brutal attempt. The negro was immediately apprehended, and was tried at the Kingston assizes, condemned, and executed.

Bolivar, at this time, found a very useful ally in Brion, an opulent native of Curaçoa, who attached himself to the independent cause, and furnished some very useful supplies, at a time they were greatly needed by the Patriots; he likewise fitted out a small squadron, the first that bore the Colombian flag, to the command of which he was appointed with the rank of admiral. Having collected a number of emigrants from the main, who, like himself, had been obliged to fly from the superiority of the Spanish force, Bolivar now proceeded to the Island of Margarita, which had been wrested by General Arismendi from the grasp of Spain; he there recruited his force, and

once more setting sail for the shores of his country, touched at Carúpano, near Cumaná, and from thence proceeded to Ocumare, where he effected a landing. He here, however, experienced fresh reverses; for having pushed forward a part of his force under General Macgregor, in the direction of Vittoria, he was himself attacked by Morales, and compelled to reimbark. Macgregor, who has since acquired rather an unfortunate celebrity in Europe, had been for some time in the Patriot service, and had previously distinguished himself in Popayan; on the present occasion he gained considerable credit by his masterly retreat in the face of the Spanish forces from Vittoria to Barcelona, which he took, and was thereby enabled to effect a junction with the Patriots in New Andalusia and Guayana.

Bolivar returned to Aux Cayes, where he obtained further reinforcements; and in December, 1816, he again landed in Venezuela, and attempted to re-organize the republican government: for this purpose he joined the Patriots in Barcelona, and after a short stay in that place, proceeded across the plains to the Orinoco, and succeeded in gaining possession of Angostura, the capital of Spanish Guayana, situated on the banks of that river. By the acquisition of this city, he was enabled to open a communication with Europe, from which the

most beneficial effects resulted; he also fixed the seat of his infant government in this place, where it remained, till happier circumstances enabled him to remove it to a more central part of the republic.

Whilst these affairs were going on in Venezuela, Morillo, having left garrisons in Carthagena, and Santa Martha, and established Sámano, the vice-roy of Santa Fé, in his government, directed his attention to the proceedings of Bolivar and the Patriots in Venezuela, and hastened to that country to check their further progress, and to meet a reinforcement of 1600 men, which, in the early part of 1817, was sent him from Spain; and, for the eighteen subsequent months, a harassing and destructive warfare was carried on, without any decided advantage to either party.

Bolivar, at length weary of this useless waste of his resources, resolved upon the bold and decisive step of passing the mountains which separate Venezuela and New Granada, and falling by surprise upon the Spaniards in the kingdom. He accordingly made the necessary arrangements, and joining General Santander in the plains of Casanare, he left Paez to watch the motions of Morillo, and keep him in check, and boldly threw himself into the Páramo of Chita.*

* In describing the mountainous regions of Colombia, the

His gallant army encountered considerable difficulties, and suffered great loss in this passage; but he at length succeeded in gaining the opposite side of the mountain, and after refreshing his men with a few days' rest, pursued his march towards the capital. His progress was, however, soon arrested by the Spanish commanders, and he was brought to action at the Pantano de Bargas, on the 25th July, 1819, where he gained a complete victory. On the 7th of August following, the great and decisive battle of Boyacá was fought, in which nearly the whole of the Spanish army was either killed or taken prisoners, and the road opened to the capital.

"The Battalion of Albion," composed entirely of Englishmen, who had formed part of the different expeditions which had arrived in the Orinoco, eminently distinguished itself on these occasions, and in a great measure contributed to the success

words Páramo and Nevada will often occur; it must be observed, therefore, that they do not admit of indiscriminate use: a Páramo is a mountain which rises from the height of 9,000 feet, to any point below the limit of perpetual snow, which, within the tropics, may be estimated at an elevation of about 14,000 feet above the level of the sea. These mountains are covered with stunted trees, and are always damp, and extremely cold; it rains on their summits almost incessantly, and snow frequently falls, but does not lie. A Nevada is a mountain more than 14,000 feet high, and whose top is covered with perpetual snow.

of the Patriots. Bolivar was so pleased with their conduct, that he thanked them in General Orders, and made the whole, both of the officers and men, Members of the Order of Liberators, the highest honour which can be conferred in the country. By these successes, Bolivar gained possession of Santa Fé, and in a short time no Spanish force was left in that division of New Granada, with the exception of the garrisons of Carthagena and Santa Martha.

It will be an ungrateful task for the future historian of these events to record, that the glory acquired by the Patriots in these victories was tarnished by another of those wanton and barbarous massacres, which had disgraced so many of the operations of the war, and which, on this occasion, could not even be justified by the plea of retaliation, no late act of the Spaniards having provoked so harsh and cruel a measure. Some months, however, after the action of Boyacá, Colonel Barreira, the commander of the Spanish army, and about fifty other officers, who had fallen into the hands of the Patriots, and had been kept close prisoners in Santa Fé, were, without any previous notice or preparation, ordered by Santander to be taken from their dungeons and shot; an order which was, within three hours after it was issued, carried into execution. Bolivar was, at the time this event took place, absent from the

capital, and is said to have disapproved of the proceeding.

In the summer of 1820, General Montilla and Admiral Brion, with the small force which remained with them after the disastrous affair of Rio Hacha, of which I shall give a more particular account, when speaking of the expedition of General D'Evereux, effected a landing at Savanilla, a small harbour near the mouths of the river Magdalena, and advancing into the interior, established themselves at Baranquilla, a town situated on its banks, at the distance of about twenty miles from the coast. As soon as their arrival was known, a force was sent down the river to join them, and an expedition was immediately prepared to drive the Spaniards from the province and city of Santa Martha. Twelve hundred men were placed, for this service, under the command of Colonel Careño, who, having traversed the province, and destroyed a Spanish force which had been sent to oppose his progress, arrived at the Cienega, a large Indian village, which covers the approach to Santa Martha, and which had been strongly fortified to resist his attack. A flotilla of gunboats, under the command of General Padilla, was sent by the inland navigation of the lakes, through which the trade between Santa Martha and the river Magdalena is carried on, to co-

operate with Careño, and a joint attack being made upon the place, it was carried by assault, and Santa Martha surrendered without further opposition. This was an important conquest to the Patriots of New Granada, as they thereby obtained a secure position on the coast, which enabled them to open a communication with the Islands of the Caribbean sea.

No event of importance had occurred in Venezuela during this interval; and in the spring of 1821, an armistice being agreed upon between Bolivar and Morillo, the latter availed himself of this opportunity to return to Spain, leaving his army under the command of Latorre and Morales. Bolivar, however, soon found that the continuance of the armistice was unfavourable to his interests; he accordingly gave notice to the Spanish generals of his intention to recommence hostilities; and, shortly after, the victory of Carabobo put an end to the sufferings of Venezuela, and firmly established its independence. The Royalists offered battle on this occasion in the fullest confidence of success. Their army was composed of their choicest troops, and was numerically superior to that of the Patriots; they had, besides, the advantage of an excellent position. Bolivar had likewise collected some of his best troops, amongst whom was the English battalion which had been brought out by

General English, and was then commanded by Colonel Ferrier; he had been so satisfied with the conduct of the English at the battle of Boyacá, that on this occasion he gave them the post of honour, and they, together with a native battalion, were appointed to lead the attack. The result fully answered the expectation of the general, for, after receiving the enemy's fire with admirable coolness, the British charged the Spanish line; and in less than twenty minutes they had, unsupported, gained a complete victory. The loss of the Spaniards was very great, and the survivors fled with the utmost precipitation to Porto Cabello. The English battalion also suffered severely, and amongst their killed was their gallant leader, Colonel Ferrier. By this victory, Caraccas, and every part of Venezuela, except Porto Cabello, fell into the hands of the patriots, and the siege of this latter place was immediately formed.

In the autumn of the same year, Carthagena surrendered to the force under the command of Montilla, who had commenced the siege, or rather the blockade, of this important fortress, shortly after his arrival at Savanilla. In this siege, as well as in the storming of the batteries of the Cienega, Padilla, whom the events of the revolution have raised from the humble condition of Boga,*

* Boga, derived from the Spanish verb bogar, to row, is a

to his present situation, at the head of the Colombian marine, distinguished himself by his bravery and intrepidity, and contributed greatly to the success of the Patriots. These victories gave the republicans possession of the whole of the interior of Venezuela, and of that part of New Granada comprised in the Audiencia of Santa Fé; and the only point on the coast held by the Spaniards, from the mouths of the Orinoco to the borders of Mexico, was Porto Cabello: they were, however, still in force in the Audience of Quito; and thither Bolivar immediately sent a detachment to reinforce General Sucre, who had already obtained some advantages over them. The installation of the first congress of the republic in Cúcuta for some time detained Bolivar, and prevented him from joining the army in the south; but, as soon as circumstances permitted, he hastened thither, and, soon after, the decisive victory of Pichincha gave the Patriots possession of the city of Quito, and the whole territory formerly comprised in the viceroyalty of New Granada.

During the course of these events in the south,

general appellation given to the persons employed in the navigation of the rivers in Colombia: it is, however, in most cases, a misnomer; for in all the large rivers, the current is too strong to be stemmed by oars, and poles are used for propelling boats against the stream; this renders the occupation of a boga extremely laborious.

Morales, who had succeeded in maintaining his position in Porto Cabello, the siege of which place had been abandoned by the patriots, made, in the Autumn of 1821, an incursion into the province of Coro, from whence he advanced upon Maracaybo; and two battalions of the Colombian army, which had proceeded as far as Santa Martha, on their way to join Sucre, were recalled to oppose him. A harassing warfare was, for some months, carried on in the barren and desolate province of Coro, which terminated in the retreat of Morales once more within the walls of Porto Cabello. Having, however, been able to procure supplies from Curaçoa and Porto Rico, this active and enterprising enemy of Colombia again made his appearance in the field, and seized a position in the very centre of the republic, from whence he spread alarm and consternation in every direction. Having collected about five hundred Spanish troops, he embarked his little force, and suddenly made his appearance to leeward of the Lagoon of Maracaybo, where he effected a landing; and favoured by the indecision and pusillanimity of the Colombian general intrusted with the defence of that important place, and the treachery of the officer commanding the fort of San Carlos, at the entrance of the Lagoon, he succeeded in obtaining possession of the city

and its forts, without the loss of a man. He was immediately joined by the Goagira Indians inhabiting the province of Rio Hacha; and having received reinforcements from Porto Rico, and raised some levies in the country, he soon found himself at the head of between two and three thousand men.

The situation he occupied was the most favourable that could have been chosen, for the purpose of annoying the Colombian government; for, having command of the Lagoon, it afforded him an opportunity of advancing either upon Caraccas, Bogotá, or the province of Santa Martha, which was always suspected of being ripe for any movement in favour of the Royalists: the government was sufficiently aware of its danger, and used the most strenuous exertions to meet and avert it; for the whole country was drained, both of men and of money, to enable the commanders, in the different provinces menaced with invasion, to raise forces to resist the threatened attack. Morales, notwithstanding, for nearly twelve months, kept them all at bay, nor could they make any impression on his position, till Padilla, with his flotilla, having gallantly forced his way into the Lagoon, through the fire of the fort, established a position on the eastern shore, in the province of Coro, and shortly after engaged the flotilla of Morales, con-

sisting of thirty vessels of different sizes, the whole of which he either captured or destroyed, Morales, being, in consequence of this defeat, prevented from obtaining the necessary supplies for his troops, capitulated, on condition of being allowed to withdraw with all his European troops, engaging not to serve against Colombia again during the war. After this success, the Colombians, being convinced of the necessity of preventing a recurrence of this danger, again formed the siege of Porto Cabello, which was vigorously pressed, and the outworks being carried by assault on November 9th, 1823, the citadel capitulated the following day, and the Spaniards were, at length, after a protracted contest of thirteen years, completely exterminated from the territory of the republic.

From the cursory view which has thus been taken of the principal events which have led to the establishment of the independence of Colombia, some idea may be formed of the condition to which that country has been reduced, by the obstinate and bloody conflict in which she was so long engaged. Her towns have been laid in ruins, and her provinces depopulated; her agriculture has languished; the working of her mines, an important source of her wealth, has been suspended for want of hands to carry on the necessary

operations; and the commerce of her maritime cities has been completely paralysed by the diminished quantity of her produce, and the contracted demand for the supplies of foreign merchandise.

It cannot be expected, that she should instantaneously recover from so severe a shock, and cicatrise wounds so deep as those which she has received; but such is the fertility of her soil, the salubrity of her climate, and the facility with which the necessaries of life are procured, that, under the fostering care of a provident and patriotic government, a very few years will suffice to recruit her exhausted population, repair her losses, and spread over her lands that abundance with which nature so prodigally rewards the exertions of man in those favoured climes.

It will have been observed in the foregoing narrative, that the name of Bolivar is associated with almost every important operation of the war: it is likewise the only name which has acquired any celebrity in the unexampled contest which for sixteen years has been carried on throughout the extent of the Western Continent, from the straits of Magellan to the northern extremity of the torrid zone. Some account, therefore, of the person who has acted so conspicuous a part in the great drama of the South American revolution, forms a

necessary appendage to a history of the occurrences which have contributed to that important event.

Simon Bolivar is descended from one of the richest Creole families of the province of Caracas: he was born about the year 1780, and, by an indulgence rarely granted at that time by the Court of Spain to its South American subjects, was sent to Europe for the completion of his education. Having spent some time at Madrid for that purpose, he afterwards visited great part of Europe, and, in his twenty-third year, returned to Venezuela, with a mind enlightened by a familiarity with the liberal institutions of the age, and indignant at the degraded condition of his native country. The attempts of Miranda to liberate the South American Colonies from the yoke of Spain, affording the opportunity, shortly after his return, for an avowal of his sentiments, and a display of that ardent love of freedom and devotion to the welfare of his country which have so conspicuously marked his subsequent career, he hastened to enrol himself under his banners; and, at the commencement of his public life, set his countrymen a glorious example of disinterested patriotism, by the manumission of his slaves, and the sacrifice of his patrimonial wealth to the sacred cause in which he had embarked.

After the defeat and death of Miranda, the

hopes of the patriots of Venezuela were fixed almost exclusively upon Bolivar, and he was appointed to the command of their armies, and invested with provisional powers, which conferred on him the most absolute authority: fourteen years have now elapsed since he was first intrusted with this important charge, and during the whole of that time he has been engaged in unwearied efforts to secure the independence of his country—an object which he has pursued with a zeal and steady perseverance, of which history affords but few examples.

He was not bred to the profession of arms; but the activity of his mind, and the ardour with which he embraced a military life, supplied the want of a more regular education, and enabled him to acquire as much tactical knowledge as was requisite for the state of warfare in which he was engaged. During the early part of his martial career, the army of the Independents met, indeed, with many reverses, which were as much attributed to the incapacity of its commander, as to the skill or bravery of its opponents; but he soon remedied these defects, and, for the last seven years, the Colombian army has never been beaten when he has commanded it in person. He has had, hitherto, more opportunity of displaying his military, than his political talent; indeed, the

department of government which would afford opportunity for the exercise of the latter quality, is one in which he seems little anxious to engage, and the few attempts he has made at legislation have certainly not been eminently successful.

The actions of Bolivar have been the theme of such exaggerated eulogy, both in his own country and in Europe, that it becomes almost an invidious task to speak of him in terms of ordinary praise; but this zeal of his admirers in some measure defeats its own object, for, by ranking him with the first captains and most skilful legislators of ancient or modern times, they force comparisons upon the world, which detract from his real merits, and are injurious to his hard-earned fame. He is neither a Napoleon in war, nor a Washington in council; but his services have been the most important and essential that ever man had the good fortune to render to his country.

When the fortunes of the Patriots were at the lowest ebb, and under circumstances which would have sunk an ordinary mind into despondence, he never despaired of ultimate success, or suffered misfortune for a moment to disturb the equanimity and patient courage by which he inspired confidence in the breasts of his countrymen, and infused the vigour and animation which have led to so successful a result. To form, however, a cor-

rect estimate of his merits, and of the difficulty of the task he has performed, it is necessary to know the people with whom he has had to deal, and the country which has been the scene of his operations; for a great part of his followers had scarcely passed the confines of civilisation, and many even of those, who, from their superior education and habits of life, might have been expected to co-operate with his views, were as often his rivals as his coadjutors; nothing, therefore, but a firmness and decision of character which has rarely been equalled, and never surpassed, could have enabled him to control the various passions brought by the revolutionary ferment into a state of unusual and dangerous excitement, and give them a direction beneficial to the public interest. The necessity, likewise, of encouraging or keeping in awe, by his presence, the different parts of the extensive country subject to his command, and the difficulty of traversing the plains and mountains, in which the traveller is exposed to every extreme of climate, and the commander obliged to share the hardships of the meanest soldier, compelled him to lead, during the whole of the revolutionary war, so laborious a life, that, had he not been gifted by nature with extraordinary powers, both of body and mind, he must have sunk under the fatigues which he has undergone.

By the ability and energy he has displayed in the difficult circumstances in which he has been placed, he has acquired a wonderful ascendancy over all classes of his countrymen; some few, indeed, of the persons who were opposed to him, in the civil troubles which existed during the early part of the revolution, may still regard him with a jealous eye, but the greater part of the chieftains entertain for him the most cordial and enthusiastic esteem, and the soldiery and people look up to him with sentiments little short of religious veneration. Bolivar, therefore, stands quite alone at the head of the Colombian government, nor can any person in the republic be considered as occupying even the second place: Paez, Mariño, Urdaneta, Bermudez, Santander, Montilla, and other generals, are men of undoubted courage, and some of them possess cultivated understandings, and polished manners; but beyond the province in which they were born, or in which they have acquired an interest by military command, they are altogether destitute of influence. Paez, for instance, is as little thought of in New Granada, or Santander in Venezuela, as either of them can be in any country of Europe. Till the government, therefore, is more firmly established, and the people, by becoming more familiar with freedom, feel a deeper interest in the support of their new

institutions, everything depends upon Bolivar: he was one of the earliest champions of his country's independence; he has firmly and courageously maintained his post throughout the arduous struggle, and all parties now tacitly acknowledge his superiority, by referring themselves to his arbitration in the dissensions which at present threaten to disturb the tranquillity of Colombia.

CHAPTER II.

Narrative of a Campaign—English Expeditions—Colonels Hippisley, Macdonald, Wilson, Skene, Campbell, Gilmour, Elsom—Generals English, Macgregor, D'Evereux.

As a narrative of the events of a single campaign in Colombia may be considered as an epitome of the transactions of the whole war, and will serve to convey, to the European reader, a better idea of the hardships endured by the soldier, and of the vindictive spirit with which the war was carried on by both parties, than any abstract observations unaccompanied by a reference to facts, I shall, notwithstanding the insignificance of the subject, in a military point of view, give the details of that mentioned in page 46, which terminated in the capture of Santa Martha, and which affords a tolerably fair specimen of all the operations by which the country has been harassed for the period of fourteen years.

The Patriots had always attached great importance to the possession of the city and province of Santa Martha; no sooner, therefore, were they again in force on the western bank of the Magdalena, than they fitted out an expedition at Baran-

quilla and Soledad, two considerable towns in the province of Carthagena, for the attainment of this favourite object. General Montilla, who at that time commanded the troops in that part of Colombia, appointed Colonel Careño to the command of the force collected for this purpose, which consisted of the regiment of Black Rifles, about eight hundred strong, and the battalion of Giraldot, (named after a patriotic leader, who had greatly distinguished himself in the early part of the revolution, and fallen in one of the actions with the royalists,) consisting of between four and five hundred men. A flotilla of gunboats, under the command of Padilla, was likewise prepared to attack the Cienega, the point upon which the Spaniards relied for the defence of Santa Martha; and about two hundred and fifty of the Giraldots were put on board to act as marines, or effect a landing, if circumstances permitted a co-operation with the troops which went by land. The Spaniards were no less anxious to defend themselves; and in addition to the regular forces composing the garrison of Santa Martha, they armed the Indians of the Cienega, and erected batteries on every point by which the villages of the Cienega and Pueblo Viejo could be approached, either by land or by the lake.

It may be observed, that many of those indige-

nous inhabitants of the country, who remained collected in tribes, retaining in a great measure their old habits and customs, were strenuous supporters of the Spanish government throughout the revolutionary war. The conduct of the Goagira Indians of Rio Hacha, of the Pastusos of the province of Pasto, and of these Cienega Indians, may be adduced as instances of the truth of this remark. These last, being more civilized than any of the others, and having, from their situation near the city of Santa Martha and the coast, a freer intercourse with foreigners, had joined to their native courage a confidence, inspired by some notions of military discipline, and the use of fire-arms, in which they are expert, and had always been formidable enemies of the Patriots, having entirely destroyed one or two expeditions, which had been previously fitted out against Santa Martha.

These Indians are a remarkably fine race of men, few of them being less than six feet high, with a fine manly expression of countenance, entirely free from the stupid vacuity by which the features of the Indian are so generally characterised: their costume is plain and simple, consisting merely of a large straw hat, and check shirt and trousers, with a handkerchief of some gaudy colour tied round the waist: their hair is black, full upon the head, and long, and is generally

worn tied or plaited behind in a thick club. The population of these villages must have been considerable, as it was calculated, and I believe with truth, that they brought three thousand muskets into the field on the day of the action in which the Cienega was taken. Although these Indians retained their individuality as a tribe, they had been long converted to Christianity, and inhabited a Pueblo de Doctrina, having a large and substantial church, in which service was performed by a secular priest, necessarily a white person, who possessed great influence over them. So far, however, from being subject to the civil or military power of the Governor of Santa Martha, they had, from their number and warlike habits, acquired an importance which rendered them sometimes unpleasant neighbours to the Spaniards, who were glad to soothe them, and keep them in good humour by a remission of tribute, and every other fiscal burthen.

The extensive lake upon the banks of which their village is situated, induced every individual to follow the occupation of fishing, and each family likewise cultivated a piece of ground in the rich lands lying at the foot of the Sierra Nevada; and such is the abundance of fish in the lake, and the fertility of the soil which they cultivated, that one day of the week employed in each of the pur-

suits of fishing and agriculture, not only enabled them to procure in abundance all the necessaries of life, but also to provide a surplus, by the disposal of which in Santa Martha they obtained the means of indulging in luxuries and dissipation during the time they were not employed in labour. They lived, therefore, a very easy and independent life, and the dread of any change induced them to join cordially with the Spaniards in their attempt to repel the attack of the Patriots. Sanchez Lima, the commander of the Spanish troops, relying upon these men for the defence of the place, or, perhaps, not choosing to trust the small number of European troops which he had with him, to their caprice or want of steadiness in the event of an action, marched with his little force out of Santa Martha, and posted himself at a town on the eastern bank of the Magdalena, considerably above Soledad; by which means he threatened the province of Carthagena, and prevented the expedition from proceeding against Santa Martha, till he had been previously disposed of.

Careño's first object was, therefore, to accomplish this purpose, and having filled up the deficiency occasioned in the battalion of Giraldot, by the detachment of so many of its men to serve on board of the flotilla, with such recruits as he could hastily collect, he marched his army, consisting of

rather more than thirteen hundred men, along the western bank of the river, till he came nearly opposite Guimaro, the town occupied by the Spanish force, which he immediately prepared to attack. I have here used the word "army," and shall continue to do so, when speaking of either the patriot or Spanish force in this campaign, for the sake of brevity; although I am aware that it may sound ridiculous to an European ear, when applied to such a number of men, as were generally collected by either party during the South American contest.

Sanchez Lima had boasted, that he would not allow the patriots to cross the river; when, however, he found them resolved upon the attempt, he evacuated the position he had taken, without firing a shot; and retreated into the interior of the province, in a direction opposite to that of Santa Martha. As it would have been extremely imprudent to have left him in force in the rear, Careño was under the necessity of pursuing him; and the chase which he led the patriots gave the English officers, who had just joined the service, a specimen of South American campaigning, by no means to their taste.

Intelligence of Sanchez Lima's retreat having been received from the spies, or, as they are called by the Spaniards, "listeners," (escuchas,)

(a service to which the Indians are admirably adapted,) the troops were embarked in bongos, (large boats used in the navigation of the river,) and passed over to the province of Santa Martha: during this short passage, two or three of the soldiers, in consequence of the crowded state of the boats, fell into the river, and were instantly carried off by the alligators, who are always on the look out for prey, and never fail to follow a boat, when they see it full of people. Although the commander of the patriots was aware that *no* opposition would be made to his landing at Guimaro, he was by no means prepared for the kind of hostility he encountered, or the determined aversion to the independent cause evinced by the inhabitants of the province of Santa Martha. On entering Guimaro, not a living creature was to be seen; for not only had the inhabitants fled to the woods, (*al monte,*) but they had carried off with them all their domestic animals, and every moveable article of their household furniture. The patriot army found itself, therefore, suddenly and most unexpectedly, in the midst of a complete desert, and without the possibility of procuring a single article for its support.

Such is the state of the communication between the different towns in this country, even in those parts where the surface is perfectly level, that

wheel carriages are unknown: everything, therefore, is carried on the backs of beasts of burthen; and the tracks through the woods, dignified by the name of roads, are in such a wretched state, that the poor animals are in a few days completely knocked up, and it is almost impossible for an army to carry any provisions with it. As the province of Santa Martha abounds in considerable towns, in which Careño had expected to meet with a ready supply, he was greatly disconcerted by these measures of the royalists, and obliged to wait till his cavalry had collected a sufficient number of cattle to ensure a regular supply. The cavalry of the Colombian army are almost all, or were, at least, at that time, Llaneros, or men of the plains, who, bred from their infancy amongst the innumerable herds which feed on those boundless tracts, acquire a tact in the management of cattle which is quite extraordinary.

The men and the beasts have been so accustomed to each other all their lives, that they seem to have acquired a language which is mutually understood; and by these means the Llaneros are able to carry a herd of cattle, without losing a single head, through woods, which to Europeans would be almost impervious. An army, therefore, without the expense of a commissariat, and with very little trouble to its commander, is always

sure, at least, of beef; and if it has the good fortune to be in a part of the country where there is water, it may likewise indulge in that unsophisticated beverage: this, however, is not always the case; for during the dry season, in the great plains, and sometimes even in the woodlands, water is a scarce commodity, and the men suffer dreadfully from the want of it. The province of Santa Martha is fortunate in this respect, being intersected by a number of fine streams, which at all times of the year afford a supply of this necessary article.

The patriots were, on this occasion, reduced to this humble diet rather sooner than they expected, and they met with very little variety during the campaign; sometimes, indeed, a stray pig or chicken, which had escaped the notice of its owners, was found in the deserted towns, and afforded a more luxurious meal to the fortunate captors; but such instances were rare. In such situations a bag of salt is one of the greatest treasures an army can possess; for notwithstanding Humboldt's observation, that the Indians are not great salt eaters, I have frequently known soldiers, even when nothing else was to be procured, refuse their rations of beef, if unaccompanied by that article, as they imagine that this description of food would, without it, inevitably occasion dysen-

tery, a disorder the most frequent and the most to be dreaded of any with which troops are afflicted in a tropical climate.

In a late interesting and amusing publication,* I have observed that its gallant author is a great eulogist of this beef-and-water diet, and imagines that it enabled him to support a more than ordinary degree of fatigue: I have myself tried it for some months, but have by no means formed so favourable an opinion of it. Being of a tolerably good constitution, it never produced any injurious effects upon me, but I have seen hundreds die under it; and I must confess, that I myself feel in better health and more invigorated, when I have taken a good beefsteak, with all its regular appurtenances and a pint of wine, in a coffee-house in London, than I ever did after having partaken of the finest bullock, or the purest stream which ever fed or flowed in the forests of South America.

Careño, having met with so inhospitable a reception at Guimaro, proceeded in a day or two to Peñon, another considerable village on the banks of the river; but it was just the same—the inhabitants were all *al monte*. It is, by the bye, no great inconvenience to a family in the warm climate of South America to make this little change in their residence; for they are not encum-

* Captain Head's Journey in the Pampas, &c.

bered with a superfluity of household goods, and in the dry season the hammock will hang as commodiously between two trees in the wood, as from the rafters of the house in the village: the pigs and poultry, likewise, are so domesticated, that they comply without scruple with the migratory fancies of the family; and the plantain walk is generally at some little distance from the town, so that they can come, in the course of the night, and help themselves to what they want. They make, therefore, these temporary changes of abode on much more trivial occasions than when they expect to have their throats cut by an invading enemy: often, during the war, I have known the whole male population of a district resort to this expedient, to avoid the arbitrary conscriptions by which the ranks of the army were at that time filled.

The patriot commander, having at length ascertained the route taken by Sanchez Lima, resolved to lose no more time before he set out in pursuit of him, and the army was ordered to commence its march on the evening of the day after its arrival in Peñon. As soon as these orders were issued, fifty of the recruits, so lately attached to the battalion of Giraldot, having had already enough of a military life, deserted, and took themselves off *al monte*, the never-failing remedy for every grievance: as the whole of the surrounding

country was an interminable forest, and they had two hours' start before their defection was discovered, any attempt to retake them would have been fruitless; the commander, therefore, took no further trouble about them.

The rainy season being just at an end, the roads were in their very worst state, and the rivers and smaller streams much swollen; and as the direction in which the army was now to proceed lay across them all, the first evening's march was tedious and fatiguing. The officers, indeed, were all mounted, but the miserable state of the narrow track, in which the soldiers were obliged to march by single files, frequently up to the knee, for miles together, in mud and water, jaded them exceedingly.

After marching till midnight, the army reached a small eminence, which being rather less wet than the level country through which they had passed, was selected as the bivouac for the night. Field-equipage, or tents, are things unknown in Colombia: the officer generally carries a hammock on his saddle, which he slings between two trees, to one of which he ties his horse; and his accommodations for the night are thus easily and quickly prepared: the soldier, wet and harassed as he is, has no other bed than the damp earth, and all are equally without provisions. As soon as

the dawn of day is perceptible, the reveillée is beaten, and it requires very few minutes to get everything in readiness to 'continue' the march; such is the history of many a night of a Colombian campaign. After marching the greater part of the next day, the army arrived at another town, but it was equally deserted with those on the banks of the river: it afforded, however, a drier spot for the soldier to spread his blanket, and a cover to shelter him from the dews, which at this season, when the periodical rains have just ceased, and the ground is saturated with moisture, are very heavy and pernicious. The cavalry were also here with the herd, and a bullock was immediately slaughtered for the use of the troops.

Their method of cutting up a beast is peculiar to the Spaniards: the carcass is not separated into joints, but the flesh is cut from the bones of the animal the moment it is slaughtered, in long narrow strips, which are very convenient for the purpose of field-cooking. The soldiers, and particularly the Llaneros, are very skilful in dressing their beef: they cut it thin, and run a stake through it, which they cross with transverse stakes or skewers, thus presenting a large surface to the fire; they then rest the end of the longer stake upon the ground, and continue turning it till the meat is done. I have eaten a steak dressed in

this manner, which would not have disgraced even the kitchen of Dolly, or any other equally celebrated chopmonger of the metropolis of England.

For several days the army went on in this manner, passing the night sometimes in the woods, and sometimes in deserted towns, and halting for three or four hours, every other day, to kill cattle and cook provisions for that and the succeeding day, every man carrying with him a few slips of beef. On one or two occasions, the cavalry deviated from the line of march, and the troops were left entirely without food: this, however, did not often happen. It became now evident that the patriots were on the track of the Spanish army, and at no great distance from it, the fires of their bivouacs being every day met with: Careño pressed forward, therefore, with redoubled vigour.

After two or three days' march the effects of fatigue and bad living were sensibly felt by the troops. Every morning five or six in each battalion were reported unable to proceed; but such was the dread of being left in the villages, and exposed to the fury of the enemy, who were sure to return to their habitations as soon as the army had passed, that the men kept on as long as their strength would allow them. In consequence of this, many dropped daily during the march, and

the few beasts of burthen, that still continued to follow the army, being already loaded with the sick, the rear-guard were under the heart-rending necessity of leaving the poor wretches to their fate. Some few would so far recover by rest, as to come on in the cool of the evening, and join the army; but the greater part of them fell a prey to the tigers with which these woods abound, or to the no less ferocious inhabitants of the country.

Nothing can be imagined more dreary and tiresome than a march for so many days through these forests; for the nature of the road obliges even a small body of men to occupy such an extent of ground, and to present so many points of attack, that it is absolutely necessary for the officers to keep their several stations; and for days together, a person is, for all purposes of intercourse, as much in solitude as if he were alone, and there is scarcely an object or a sound to break the dull uniformity of the scene. It occasioned, therefore, universal joy, when, one morning, after having been buried for more than a fortnight in the woods, a few straggling shots were heard, and it was ascertained that they proceeded from the rear-guard of the Spanish army, which had been overtaken by the cavalry of the patriots. Being separated from each other by a deep and rapid river, the Spaniards again escaped; and the time

lost in passing the troops over the river did not allow Careño to follow them farther that night: he, however, learnt from his spies the position they had taken, and proceeded the next day in search of them.

They had retreated upon San Carlos de la Fundacion, where they had chosen a tolerably good position, defended by a river, and seemed inclined to make a stand. Although they were aware that the patriots were so near them in greatly superior numbers, they kept so bad a look out, that Careño came upon them in the town by surprise, and after exchanging a few shots, drove them to their position across the river, where they were attacked by two companies of the rifles, with such impetuosity, that they were driven from it in an instant, and thought only of saving themselves by a precipitate flight. Sanchez Lima, and a few of his officers, escaped, owing to the fleetness of their horses; but Careño's cavalry succeeded in taking some prisoners, and amongst them, a priest, who had been a zealous partisan of the Spaniards, and who was considered to be a prize of great importance. The men, and such of the officers as were not mounted, by throwing themselves into the woods, succeeded in evading the pursuit; but they were so completely broken, that they never attempted to rally, and being apprehensive that

the usual barbarities would be practised upon them, if taken, they wandered about till, sinking under fatigue and hunger, they became, as was supposed, from nothing having been ever heard of them, almost all a prey to the tigers. Three or four of the officers, after having been in this situation for three days, surrendered themselves at the outposts of the patriots; and for the first time, I believe, during the war, instead of being massacred, were made prisoners, and sent to head-quarters in the province of Carthagena. These unusual acts of clemency were practised to remove, if possible, the unfavourable impression which had been made on the minds of the inhabitants of the province of Santa Martha by the artifices of the priests, who, by representing the patriots in the most terrific form, had been principally instrumental in inducing the people to quit their habitations.

After the victory obtained at La Fundacion, Careño halted for three or four days to refresh his troops, and collect stragglers who had remained behind: he likewise expected to be joined by his magazine, which, in consequence of the state of the roads, he had sent with some of his sick, under the command of the Colonel of the battalion of Giraldot, down one of the rivers falling into the great lake of the Cienega, that he might come

round by water and join him at this place. Unfortunately, however, when on the lake, the Colonel, falling in with some of the Spanish gunboats, was taken prisoner, with all his party, and lost nearly all the ammunition of the Colombian army. This was a severe blow to Careño: he had, however, advanced too far to think of retreat, and therefore resolved to push forward to the Cienega, where he knew the main force of the enemy was posted to receive him.

For some days the march was continued as before, without seeing or hearing anything of either friend or foe; but on the approach of the army to the Rio Frio, one of the most considerable rivers that traverse the province, it was found that a party of the Cienega Indians was posted to dispute its passage. Nothing, however, daunted Careño, who immediately opened a fire of musketry upon them, under cover of which he passed the river with a company of the rifles; and notwithstanding the strength of their position upon the steep bank of a river, and covered by an impenetrable wood, he soon dislodged them with very little loss to himself, and passed the river without further opposition.

In the course of the evening, two unfortunate inhabitants of the country, who, I really believe, had not been at all engaged in the trifling skir-

mish, were taken prisoners and brought before Careño, who was lying in his hammock, in a hovel on the banks of the river. He questioned them on the strength and movements of the enemy, and kept them engaged in very familiar conversation for nearly half an hour, laughing and joking with them in a manner that set them quite at their ease; when, turning suddenly to a Creole officer in attendance, the significant expression of "*mateles*" (kill them) was at once their sentence and only notice to prepare for instant execution. Notwithstanding the remonstrance of some of the English officers, the poor fellows were immediately taken down to the water's edge; and the officer, who had received the Colonel's order, rejoicing apparently at this return to their former system of butchery, himself performed the office of executioner, hacking the unfortunate wretches most barbarously with a small sabre which he wore, till at last, weary of the effort, he ordered them, wounded and half-murdered as they were, to be thrown into the river.

Another week, during which not a human being was met with, brought the army near the Cienega; and a communication being opened with Padilla, who had been for some time on the lake expecting its approach, a joint attack was concerted between the two commanders.

The Indians were well prepared for the defence of the place, having erected three batteries which commanded all the approaches to the Cienega from the country, and every point at Pueblo Viejo open to attack being lined with cannon. Careño's force had been so much diminished by sickness and fatigue, that he had not more than seven hundred men fit for service; and with this little band he had to attack nearly three thousand men—Indians indeed, but courageous, defended by their batteries, and commanded by Spanish officers. The patriots had not a gun of any description to oppose to the batteries; and, owing to the loss already mentioned, had only two small barrels of ball cartridges for the supply of the musketry: they were therefore in a perilous situation; but the least hesitation would have been fatal, for it would have dispirited the troops, and too many enemies had been left on the rear to render a retreat practicable.

The royalists sent a flag of truce the evening before the attack, to propose terms to Careño: he, however, boldly replied to it, by saying, that he should bring them his answer at the point of the bayonet, in the morning. He formed his little force into two divisions: the right, consisting entirely of rifles, and containing about four hundred and fifty men; the left, composed of the battalion

of Giraldot, reinforced by a company of rifles; and, at a preconcerted signal made by the commander of the flotilla, he commenced the attack: the main body of the enemy was opposed to his right wing, and victory in this quarter was for some time doubtful, the rifles having been broken by the impetuosity with which the Indians made their first attack. Colonel Sands, however, gallantly rallied his men, and led them to a charge which decided the fate of the day; for the undisciplined state of the Indians was unable to resist such a movement; and when once thrown into disorder, their numbers only increased the confusion and slaughter. The left wing met with scarcely any opposition, for the enemy fled at all points after their main body was defeated. About the same time, Padilla succeeded in driving them from the batteries which defended Pueblo Viejo, of which he took possession, and completed the victory of the patriots.

But they tarnished the glory of a day in which they had really exhibited great firmness and courage, by the barbarous use they made of their victory; for no sooner was all opposition at an end, than the whole army commenced the work of plunder and massacre. The greater part of the fugitives succeeded in making their escape to the woods; but many fled to the town, and endea-

voured to conceal themselves in their houses; these were, however, soon broken open, and their trembling inmates dragged forth to torture and death. The scene which ensued was of the most disgusting and revolting description; but encouraged as the soldiers were in the work of slaughter by an order of the commander, that every one who took a prisoner should maintain him out of his rations, any attempt to restrain their ferocity was not only unavailing, but even dangerous to the person, whose humanity induced him to interfere between these infuriated barbarians and their helpless victims. Four hundred of the Indians, and some Spanish officers, had fallen in the action, and double that number were slaughtered in the town; but the fugitives in the surrounding woods were still more numerous than the conquerors: it became, therefore, necessary to consult the safety of the troops by restraining them from further excesses, and they were, with some difficulty, formed, and withdrawn to a position at a short distance from the town.

As soon as order was restored, a detachment was sent forward, under the command of Colonel Masa, to take possession of Santa Martha, which lies at the distance of about twenty miles from the Cienega. On its march it fell in with an Indian, who had been sent from the fort of Dulcino, through

which the road to Santa Martha passes, to gain information of the events of the day: so little distinction was there in the dress, for uniform it could not be called, of the two parties, that the poor fellow was not at all aware of the danger he was in, and an evasive answer having been given to his inquiries, he concluded that he had fallen in with friends, and expressed his satisfaction, that he had met with *hombres de bien*, (respectable people,) instead of the *pendejos de patriotas*, (rascally patriots,) of whom he had heard so much. He was, however, carried back, and on approaching Dulcine, its suspicious appearance induced Masa to halt, as his orders were not to expose his little party by attacking it, if he found it offer any resistance; he, therefore, interrogated the prisoner as to the state of its defence, and the man, who now began to discover into what hands he had fallen, assured him, that he might attack it without any risk, as its guns were all pointed towards the sea, and could not be brought to bear upon the plain; and he supported these assertions with such solemn asseverations, that a person unacquainted with the duplicity of the Indian character might have believed him. Masa, however, knew the sort of person he had to deal with, and prudently resolved to retreat, and not trust himself within reach of the guns of the fort; but before

he gave orders to that effect, he, as the only comment upon the fellow's story, called a non-commissioned officer, and pronounced the fatal "*matele*," a sentence which appeared neither to surprise nor disturb the Indian, who seemed to consider his impending fate as the necessary consequence of having fallen into the hands of an enemy, and not worth the trouble of any remonstrance or petition for mercy. He stepped, therefore, a few paces aside, with the corporal and two soldiers, who were selected to perform the office of executioners, and whilst they were examining the priming of their muskets, with the utmost sang-froid took off the handkerchief which was tied about his waist, and leisurely folding it up put it into his hat, which he placed beside him upon the ground; both parties having finished their preparations at the same moment, the brave fellow pointed to his heart, and telling the men to come nearer, and take good aim, as soon as they levelled their pieces, flourished his hand over his head, and shouting "Viva Fernando VII." in an instant ceased to exist.

As night was now coming on, and the troops had been for several hours without water, Masa resolved upon retreating along the beach in search of the mouth of one of the small rivers which fall into the sea on this part of the coast; had he delayed the execution of his prisoner till after he had

commenced his retreat, instead of being an act of wanton barbarity, it might have been considered as a reward due to his treachery; for the moment the garrison of the fort perceived that the Patriots did not intend to approach nearer, they saluted them with a discharge of round and grape, from seven guns which commanded the road on which they were advancing; fortunately, however, either from want of skill in their artillery-men, or from our being without the range of their shot, they did no mischief.

About midnight the detachment reached a river, but so worn out with fatigue, that, having quenched their thirst, they sunk into repose on its banks, regardless of the dangers which threatened them from the numerous parties of Indians in the woods, half a dozen of whom might have surprised and destroyed the whole party. During the night, a Spanish serjeant, who had escaped from the action, and was endeavouring to make his way to Santa Martha, stumbled upon the detachment, and, from their appearance, thinking they were rather a party of fugitives like himself, than troops of the victorious army, quietly laid himself down amongst them. As the men had had nothing to eat the day before, hunger roused them betimes from their sandy bed, and before day-break they were ready to march in search of provisions: the main

body had already commenced their march before there was sufficient light to distinguish the features or dress of the intruder; but unfortunately for him, a rear-guard, under the command of a serjeant, was left behind to collect any stragglers that might remain in the woods, and as the day dawned, both his uniform and his complexion attracted a notice which was immediately fatal to him. A neighbouring plantation, by the sacrifice of its live stock, soon afforded the means of compensation for the fast of the preceding day, and intelligence having been received, that the Spaniards had evacuated the city of Santa Martha, and the forts on the road, the army proceeded immediately to occupy the place, and getting into good quarters, soon forgot all the hardships of the campaign.

Having, when speaking of the victories of Boyacá and Carabobo, made casual mention of the British troops in the Colombian service, I think it due to such of my countrymen as were engaged in it, to relate some particulars of the different expeditions which left this country in 1817, and the three following years, with the object of aiding the South Americans in their contest for freedom. Few persons are, I believe, aware of the number of Englishmen who have been sacrificed in this cause—many of whom fell ingloriously by famine

and pestilence, without having been even brought into the presence of an enemy: it is therefore desirable, that some record should be left of these events, to serve as a tribute to the memory of those who were the hapless victims of mismanagement and incapacity, as well as to that of their more fortunate companions, whose bravery and intrepidity so materially contributed to some of the most distinguished successes, which laid the foundation of South American independence. In giving this detail, I shall abstain from any comment upon the errors or misfortunes which, in some of these cases, led to such disastrous results; they have been already the source of much recrimination and angry discussion, and it is not my wish to renew these hostile feelings. I shall, therefore, merely relate the facts as they occurred, and leave the reader to deduce from them his own conclusions.

So early as the year 1811, Don Luis Lopez Mendez was sent to England, as agent to the government of Venezuela, for the purpose of taking advantage of any favourable circumstance which might present itself; and in 1817, Bolivar, after some successes which he had obtained over the Spanish generals, having advanced upon Angostura, and expecting, by the possession of that place, to open a communication with Europe,

instructed Mendez to use his endeavours to induce some of the numerous British officers, whom the cessation of hostilities on the continent of Europe had thrown into inactivity, to lend their assistance in organizing his troops, and introducing amongst them European tactics and discipline. This appeal to the gallantry of Britons was not made in vain; for as soon as it was known that Mendez had received such instructions from his government, a number of officers made him a tender of their services, and six different expeditions, fitted out in the port of London, sailed for the shores of Venezuela before the close of 1817; they were composed entirely of officers and non-commissioned officers, and carried out arms and accoutrements for the number of men which their several commanders had undertaken to equip and discipline.

One of the first persons who accepted a commission in this service was Colonel Hippisley, who raised a complement of officers sufficient for a regiment of cavalry, which was to consist of six hundred men; immediately afterwards Colonels Macdonald, Wilson, and Skene received similar commissions to raise other cavalry regiments: Colonel Campbell engaged to form a regiment of rifles, and Colonel Gilmour to raise a brigade of artillery.

As Mendez was not provided with funds to defray the expenses of these armaments, the persons who had undertaken to raise the different corps were obliged to make the necessary advances; and the strength and state of equipment of each of these expeditions were proportioned to the pecuniary means or credit of the persons who had received these commissions from the Venezuelian agent. After having encountered and overcome the difficulties necessarily attendant on such an undertaking, when money is not very abundant, these little bands at length left the British shores; they did not go out in company, for there was but little harmony amongst their leaders; but it was generally understood amongst them, that they were to touch at some of the West Indian islands, for the purpose of gaining information, before they proceeded to the point of their destination.

From the moment of their departure they met with nothing but disasters and disappointments;—the Indian, one of the largest of their vessels, having on board Colonel Skene and his party, was blown out of the Downs in a heavy gale of wind, and driven upon the coast of France, where she went to pieces, and every soul on board perished. The Emerald, with Colonel Hippisley and the officers of the first Venezuelian hussars; the

Prince, with Colonel Wilson and a small party of officers, who were to form a regiment, to be called the Red Hussars; the Dowson, with Colonel Campbell and the officers of his rifle corps; and the Britannia, with Colonel Gilmour's artillery, arrived at different British islands in the West Indies; and were almost all of them, in consequence of the incautious conduct of their commanders, seized and detained by the collectors of the customs, for some breach of the custom-house laws. The governments of the different islands treated them, however, with lenity, and they were all eventually released; but the detention was attended with great inconvenience, for many of the non-commissioned officers became disheartened at the prospect before them, and finding themselves once more under British jurisdiction, claimed the protection of the government to release them from their engagements; and several of the officers likewise retired from the service.

From these circumstances, Colonel Hippisley lost forty out of the hundred and twenty persons composing his party: almost all the other expeditions suffered in the same proportion; and the brigade of artillery was completely broken up, and all its appointments rendered useless. At length, however, they once more sailed, and steered their course for Angostura, on the banks of the Orinoco

—at that time the seat of the Venezuelian government. Soon after their arrival at that place they were ordered to proceed up the river Apure, to form a junction with Bolivar, who was at that time in the neighbourhood of Calabozo, where he was endeavouring to maintain his ground against the Spaniards; who, having regained possession of all the other parts of New Granada and Venezuela, pursued the Patriots to the plains, where they expected to derive advantages from the superiority of their discipline, which would at once put an end to the contest, and destroy the future hopes of the revolutionary party. But they had yet to learn that the Llanos are more efficient bulwarks for the defence of this part of Colombia than all the fortresses on its northern coast; for such is the facility, both of subsistence and conveyance, afforded by the herds of cattle and troops of horses which wander over these immense tracts of country, and which can only be rendered available for these purposes by the peculiar skill of the natives, that armed bands or guerrillas, if supported by the population of the country, may at any time bid defiance to an invading force; and at this period of the revolutionary war these plains afforded an asylum to the Patriots, from which all the efforts of the Spaniards were never able to dislodge them, and from whence they sallied with

renovated vigour and effected the total expulsion of their oppressors.

On the present occasion, before the British reinforcements could reach Bolivar, he had been defeated by the Spanish generals, and found himself under the necessity of making a hasty retreat upon Angostura. They met him at San Fernando de Apure; but everything was in disorder, and they were all obliged to make the best of their way back to Angostura. Here likewise all was confusion; and owing to the scarcity of money and provisions, the British were exposed to hardships and privations which many of them do not seem to have been prepared to endure, and which were greatly aggravated by their ignorance of the language and habits of the people, amongst whom they had somewhat inconsiderately thrown themselves.

Under these circumstances, misunderstandings unfortunately arose, not only between the native commanders and the British officers, but even between different parties of the English themselves; and the result was, that many of the latter, finding the state of the country, and the mode of warfare so different from what they had been led to expect, demanded their passports, and returned home in disgust. Colonels Hippisley and Wilson retired from the service a short time after the

army had retreated to Angostura; Colonel Macdonald, who, with one or two of his officers, had preceded the other expeditions, had, previous to their arrival, been killed on his passage up one of the branches of the Apure to join the army, in a dispute with the Cacique of an Indian tribe which inhabited its banks; eight or nine officers of a party of Colonel Hippisley's regiments, which had been sent forward during his detention in the Islands, under the command of Colonel English, had fallen in the late engagements between Bolivar and the Spaniards, and many others had already sunk under the deleterious effects of the climate; the assistance, therefore, afforded to the Independent cause by these expeditions was by no means commensurate with the heavy expenses incurred, and the number of officers engaged in them.

It would, however, be unjust to pass over in silence the services rendered by Colonel Pigott, Majors Sands and Peacock, and some other officers, who came out with Colonel Campbell's rifle corps. These officers were appointed to raise a battalion amongst the Native Indians of the Missions,* and the perfect state of discipline into

* The collection of a certain number of the indigenous inhabitants in a village containing a church, the ministerial duties of which were performed by a missionary monk, was

which these men were brought, and the valuable services which they rendered the republic, showed that Bolivar had formed a proper estimate of the effect of European discipline upon the raw material of the most uncivilised of his countrymen.

This battalion was named the "Black Rifles," and in all the decisive actions of the war, it has been engaged, and has eminently distinguished itself. Colonel Pigott did not remain long with the regiment, the command of which devolved on Major Sands, who was promoted to the rank of colonel, and who, besides being engaged in almost every minor affair in the plains of Venezuela, led the battalion to victory in the great battles of Boyacá, the Cienega, Carabobo, and Pichincha, and afterwards accompanied Bolivar into Peru. Major Peacock, after having seen a great deal of hard service with the battalion, unfortunately died of dysentery at Rio Hacha, soon after the battle of Carabobo. Colonel Sands, who, by his gallant conduct and military talent, has rendered himself a great favourite with Bolivar, has

called in the Spanish colonies, a *Mision* or *Pueblo de mision*. As these new settlements advanced in civilisation, or when European or Creole Spaniards settled in them for the purposes of commerce, they were confided to the ministry of a *cura* or secular priest, and denominated *Pueblos de doctrina*. For the effects of these missions upon the Indian population, see "Voyage aux Régions Equinoxiales de Humboldt."

been promoted for his services to the rank of general of brigade, and the few surviving British officers of the battalion have been all honourably distinguished.

Notwithstanding the prevalence of discontent amongst the officers who had composed the expeditions to the Orinoco, there were some of them who took a more favourable view of the Independent cause; and Bolivar had been so well satisfied with the conduct of the few English officers whom he had seen in the field, that he became anxious to engage in his service a battalion, which should be composed entirely of Englishmen; he therefore authorised Colonel English, on whom he conferred the rank of general, to raise a corps of twelve hundred men in England, for the service of the Republic; and gave similar powers to Captain Elsom, whom he promoted to the rank of colonel, to raise another battalion of five hundred men. This latter officer had originally belonged to the regiment raised by Colonel Skene; but he and Doctor Mayne, who was likewise attached to that expedition, having accidentally gone on shore at Deal, the day on which the Indian was driven out of the Downs, were unable, from the heavy sea which ran, to rejoin their ship; and thus escaped the unfortunate fate of their companions, who perished in her. They both afterwards joined

the Colombian service, in which Doctor Mayne has continued ever since, and is now Cirujano-mayor of the Hospitals in Bogotá, with the rank of Lieutenant-colonel. Colonel Elsom returned to England in the year 1818, and succeeded immediately in raising between eight and nine hundred men, whom he sent out by detachments to Angostura; he went out himself with the last in July 1819, but unfortunately died, in the September following, of a fever brought on by the anxiety and fatigue he had undergone.

There is no British corps which has entered the Colombian service to which the republic is indebted for more important and essential aid than to the battalion raised by Colonel Elsom. After his death it was joined by the survivors of the preceding expeditions, and formed into a regiment, named "The Battalion of Albion," the command of which was given to Colonel Mackintosh; it served under the immediate orders of Bolivar, during the harassing and arduous campaigns of 1819 and 1820, and underwent fatigues and privations of which the veterans, who had been enured to hardships in the campaigns of Europe, had till then had no experience, and under which numbers of them sank. When Bolivar resolved upon passing the Páramo of Chita, this battalion formed part of his force; and, on emerging

from those fatal mountains, their number was reduced to ninety, more than fifty having fallen victims to the inclemency of the elements in their passage.

The sudden change from the heat of the plains to the extreme cold and the rarefaction of the air in these elevated situations, affects the human frame in a very extraordinary manner; in some cases, the vital powers are suddenly arrested, and the body for some time retains even the attitude in which it was when seized, and all the appearance of life; in others, the subject is seized with a sort of frenzy, foaming at the mouth, and tearing himself, till exhaustion and torpor terminate his existence. This is so common an occurrence in the passage of these mountains, that persons affected with it have obtained the particular appellation of *Emparamados*. In cases of frenzy, or when the situation of the person affected is perceived by his companions before it is too late to apply a remedy, flagellation, or some other violent means of stimulating him to exertion, is usually resorted to, and seldom fails of affording relief; but the general alarm, and that selfish spirit which usually pervades any large body of men under the pressure of a great and overwhelming calamity, prevented, on this occasion, the adoption of any such means for the preservation of those affected.

The conduct of this battalion in the battles of the Pantano de Bargas and of Boyacá, and the honours conferred upon it, have been already noticed. After the Patriots had gained possession of that part of New Granada which is usually denominated "the Kingdom," the regiment was filled up with natives, and under the same commander, who was ably and gallantly supported in the whole of the service of the battalion by Major, now Colonel, Johnston; it was sent to reinforce General Sucre, in the south. During the time it was with this commander, it bore the brunt of every engagement he had with the enemy, and on some occasions suffered severely from his impetuosity. At the battle of Guachi, in September, 1821, Sucre was completely defeated, and his whole force either killed or taken prisoners. Fortunately, however, the war was not carried on with the same ferocity as at the commencement of the contest, and the British were kept as prisoners of war, until exchanged. After their release, the regiment was again filled up with fresh recruits, and bore a conspicuous part in the glorious victory of Pichincha; after which, the few surviving British, amounting only to five or six officers, and thirty privates, were allowed to retire from the service; the officers on full-pay, and the men with

the gratuity given by the government to all foreigners who have borne arms in its service.

About the same time that Colonel Elsom's corps arrived on the Orinoco, General English, who had also executed the commission with which he had been charged by Bolivar, landed with twelve hundred men in the Island of Margarita, to which place he had been ordered, for the purpose of attempting a diversion in favour of the patriots on the northern coast of Venezuela. These troops, who were distinguished by the name of the English Legion, were, soon after their arrival, carried by Brion's squadron to the Main, and having effected a landing at Barcelona, took the castle of the Moro, by which that place is defended; they afterwards made an attack on Cumaná, a place of more strength and importance, but were repulsed with considerable loss. Having thus failed in the attempt to secure a tenable position on the coast, the legion was ordered to join the army of the Patriots on the plains; and, for nearly two years, bore with exemplary fortitude and patience the hardships inseparable from a state of warfare in that country. It had not, during this period, any action of consequence, but its numbers were greatly reduced by the fatigue to which the men were constantly exposed, and the privations of every description which they endured.

Previous to the departure of the English legion from the coast, it lost its commander, General English, who having been attacked by sickness, had returned, for the benefit of medical advice, to Margarita, where he died. He was succeeded by Colonel Blossett, who commanded the regiment during the greater part of the time it was in the plains: this officer, however, having been unfortunately killed in a duel with Major Power, the command devolved on Colonel Ferrier, who fell whilst gallantly leading his men to victory in the battle of Carabobo.

The armistice concluded between Bolivar and Morillo in the spring of 1821, gave the legion a little respite, and its ranks were recruited by convalescents from the different English corps which had been in the plains, and by a part of the Irish legion which went up the Orinoco, so that at the battle of Carabobo it mustered nearly four hundred men. Bolivar was so delighted with the conduct of the English in this action, that he ordered the regiment to be distinguished by the appellation of "the Battalion of Carabobo;" and on his entry into Caraccas, promised that they should ever after form the garrison of that city, and receive full pay and rations. This distinction excited great jealousy amongst the native troops; and after the departure of Bolivar, the state of the country

rendered it difficult to perform the promises he had made to the British. Colonel Brande, therefore, who had succeeded to the command on the death of Colonel Ferrier, impatient of the inactivity of garrison duty, whilst there yet remained an enemy in the field, volunteered for more active service. His offer was readily accepted; and the legion was sent on its way to the south, as far as Santa Martha, where it was detained for two months, during which time a great number, both of the officers and men, fell victims to the yellow fever. The invasion of Coro, however, by Morales rendering it necessary to collect a force to oppose him, the English legion was remanded for that purpose; and having succeeded, as has been before stated, in obliging him to evacuate that province, has been ever since stationed on the borders of the lake of Maracaybo.

After the expulsion of the enemy from the territory of the republic, all the survivors of the different English corps, which had been in the Colombian service, were incorporated in the battalion of Carabobo. In the year 1824, the number of Englishmen remaining in the regiment amounted to one hundred and sixty; and the privates were discharged with the same remuneration which had been given to the survivors of the battalion of Albion. Many of the British

officers still remain with the regiment, the ranks of which have been filled up with natives; and Colonel Brande having retired, on account of ill health, it is now commanded by Colonel Ferrier, the brother of the officer of that name who was killed in the action of Carabobo.

The whole of these expeditions had been fitted out exclusively for the service of the republic of Venezuela, before its union with that of New Granada: previous, however, to the sailing of the two last mentioned, a force had been raised in England, by Sir Gregor Macgregor, for the purpose of assisting the patriots of New Granada. This officer has been before noticed as having distinguished himself in the service, both of New Granada and of Venezuela: he retired, however, from the service of the latter state in 1817, in consequence, I believe, of some misunderstanding with the government; and returning to England, proposed to Don Jose Real, the agent of New Granada, then resident in London, to raise a corps for the service of that republic.

General Macgregor's acquaintance with the country, and his connexions in it, (having married a relation of Bolivar,) together with his own reputation for talent, induced a great number of officers to join him, and he was enabled to raise a corps of upwards of six hundred men.

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With this force he sailed for Aux Cayes, in the island of Saint Domingo, for the purpose of obtaining information respecting the state of the country he was about to enter, previous to his landing on its coast, and likewise of waiting for a reinforcement which was to be raised and brought out to join him by Colonel Macironi.

The misfortunes of this expedition commenced very early; for the expense of raising and equipping so large a force having exhausted the funds at the disposal of its leader, he was unable to procure the necessary supplies for his men; and some unforeseen circumstances having retarded the equipment of the transports, which had been taken up in London for the conveyance of the troops raised by Macironi, the General, unwilling to proceed without them, was detained in Aux Cayes, and found himself involved in considerable difficulties.

The necessity of taking some decisive step, in order to extricate himself from this embarrassment, induced him to send his troops down to San Andres, a small island situated between Jamaica and the Isthmus of Darien, whilst he himself went to Port Royal, in Jamaica. He was very favourably received in Jamaica, where his expedition excited great interest; and the authorities of the island even overlooked an infraction of the colo-

nial law, by which he had rendered his vessel liable to seizure, as having come from a port in Saint Domingo. After staying a short time in Port Royal, and communicating with his friends in Kingston, he proceeded to join his troops in San Andres; but here new difficulties beset him, for he was without money or provisions, and no part of the coast promised him a friendly reception: he had, therefore, no alternative, but to starve or attack one of the Spanish ports, and the only subject for deliberation was the choice of the point of attack.

Santa Martha and Porto Bello were the only places which offered any prospect of success; and as the latter, although the stronger place, had the weaker garrison, it was ultimately fixed upon. He accordingly proceeded on this hazardous enterprise, and coming on the place by surprise, notwithstanding the strength of the forts, which, had they been properly manned and defended, would have bid defiance to twenty times his force, succeeded in gaining possession of it without the loss of a man, and captured in it property of very considerable value. Never did success come more opportunely to a conqueror, and never was so little benefit reaped from it, as on this unfortunate occasion; for, before Sir Gregor had been three weeks in possession of the place, he suffered him-

self to be surprised by General Horé, the governor of Panamá, who, as soon as he had received intelligence of the loss of Porto Bello, marched with a body of twelve hundred men to reconnoitre the position of the invader.

Porto Bello is surrounded by woods, under cover of which an enemy, acquainted with the country, may make his approaches undiscovered, unless a good look out is kept, and parties are constantly engaged in scouring the woods: no such precautions, however, were taken; and although advice was given of the approach of the Spaniards, the general persisted in asserting the impossibility of their being in the neighbourhood, and, together with his principal officers, dined at a feast given by the Alcaldes of the town on the day previous to the attack. A plan had, without doubt, been concerted to ensnare the English, but so completely had the suspicions of the General been lulled, and so secure did he consider his position, that, instead of occupying the forts, he and his officers were sleeping in the government-house, when the Spaniards, at an early hour of the morning, burst into the town, and having good information where to find them, proceeded immediately to seize their persons.

In the first moments of alarm and confusion, several of the English, amongst whom was Co-

lonel O'Hara, were killed, but Colonel Rafter and the greater part of the officers and men made their way to the principal fort, and Major Baldwin was in possession of the fort at the lower extremity of the town. The General himself succeeded in making his escape from the window of his bedroom, and getting off to a gun-brig, the principal vessel of his little squadron, which was lying near the town. No person who has ever seen Porto Bello would suppose, that, with nearly four hundred men in the forts, and a brig of eighteen guns in the harbour, there could have been any immediate necessity for surrendering to such a force as that brought against them by the Spanish commander. The battery of the principal fort was, indeed, enfiladed by the windows of the government-house, and the men prevented from standing to their guns; but the guns of the other fort, or one broadside from the brig, might have knocked down this house—the only building in the town capable of affording shelter to the enemy, and would soon have driven them to the woods.

It happened on this occasion, as in most other disasters of the same nature, that each party endeavoured to shift the blame from themselves, the officers on shore saying, that they surrendered the forts in consequence of being deserted by the brig; and those in the brig affirming, that they

were employed in getting a spring on her cable to bring her broadside to bear on the town, when the surrender of the forts obliged her to make the best of her way out of the harbour. The brig, however, escaped, and Colonel Rafter, on whom the command on shore had devolved, accepted the proposals of capitulation made to him by Hore, on terms apparently very favourable to the garrison, for it was stipulated that the officers and men should be sent to one of the British Islands. No sooner, however, had they marched into the square of the town, and surrendered their arms, than they were surrounded by the Spanish troops, who pinioned their arms, and immediately proceeded to strip them of their uniforms, and every article of value they had about them; Colonel Rafter in vain remonstrated with the Spanish general, whose only reply was, that "the Spaniards kept no faith with rebels."

When this ill-fated expedition entered Porto Bello, it consisted of about four hundred and seventy men, the whole of whom, with the exception of the few killed in the late attack, were thus made prisoners, and immediately marched across the Isthmus to Panamá, where the men, chained two and two together, were employed in filling up a swamp near the town, and in cleaning the streets; and the greater part of the officers, to the

number of about twenty, were sent to an unhealthy situation on the coast of Darien, where, two months afterwards, under pretence of their having attempted to escape, they were all, with the exception of Major Baldwin, barbarously shot. The men, and the few officers who had been left in Panamá, endured these hardships for eighteen months, when an order for their release was obtained from the Spanish court by the intercession of the British government; but at the time of their liberation, four officers and thirty-one men were the only survivors of this unfortunate party.

General Macgregor, after leaving Porto Bello, returned to Aux Cayes, where he found three hundred men who had been sent out by Colonel Macironi. Under the circumstances in which he then found himself, this reinforcement was an incumbrance, and he was under the necessity of projecting a fresh expedition, in order to employ them. He accordingly took them to Rio Hacha, where they effected a landing without difficulty, but were soon attacked by the Spanish troops, and nearly the whole of them taken prisoners; the general, however, again succeeded in making his escape, as did eight or ten officers, who, being dissatisfied with his conduct, had retired from him a few days previous to the attack. These unfortunate men were shortly afterwards, to the

number of two hundred and fifty, taken down to the beach, and shot; their bodies were left a prey to the tigers and gallinazos, and when the Irish legion landed at Rio Hacha, in the year following, their bones were still lying on the spot.

Thus miserably perished nearly one thousand of the best troops which had been raised in this country for the service of South America; they were principally veterans of the peninsular war, and many of them were decorated with honourable testimonials of having shared in the glory of the field of Waterloo.

These expeditions became at length so frequent, and of such magnitude, that they began to excite a considerable degree of interest in the public mind; and having been construed by the court of Spain into a breach of the neutrality professed by England, the government of this country found itself under the necessity of interfering, to prevent their further equipment. The Foreign Enlistment Bill was accordingly brought into parliament, but before its provisions had passed into a law, another expedition had already left our shores. It was that of General D'Evereux, a native of Ireland, who happened to be in Carthagena, in the year 1815, when Bolivar emigrated to Jamaica: he was not, at that time, employed in any military capacity, but, on his return to Europe,

he conceived the idea of raising a corps to assist in the liberation of South America, and repaired, for the purpose of executing this design, to his native country.

The cause was, at that time, extremely popular, and he found no difficulty in procuring as many men as his means would enable him to equip; a number, likewise, of highly respectable persons, the greater part of whom had been in the British service, took commissions in his corps. In this, and one or two other of these expeditions, the officers advanced a sum of money proportionate to the rank they were to hold, for the purpose of defraying a part of the expenses of equipment, and the remainder was provided for, either from the funds, or by the credit of the person with whom the plan originated; on the understanding originally entered into by the agents of the Venezuelian and New Granadian governments, that these expenses should be hereafter refunded by the governments of those countries.

In the early part of 1820, the main body of this expedition, consisting of about nine hundred men, sailed from Ireland, under the command of Colonel Ellmer, for the Island of Margarita; the general himself, and his staff, for some reason or other, remaining behind. No notice having been given of their intended arrival, nor any part of the nume-

rous commissariat attached to this division (which, by the bye, is rather an unnecessary appendage of an army in that country) having been sent in advance to procure the necessary supplies of provisions for the troops, they were rather coolly received by Admiral Brion, who, instead of affording them any assistance, seemed inclined to doubt whether they were to be acknowledged as allies of the republic; they found themselves, therefore, on their landing, in considerable difficulty and distress. After staying some time in this island under these embarrassing circumstances, General Montilla arrived to take the command of them, and they were embarked on board of Brion's squadron, which landed them at Rio Hacha.

But little opposition was made to their landing, and they shortly afterwards commenced their march with the intention of penetrating through the woods of that province into the interior of New Granada, for the purpose of effecting a junction with the Patriot troops in the kingdom. They were, however, soon interrupted in their progress by Sanchez Lima, the commandant of the Spanish troops in Santa Martha, who came in pursuit of them with a considerable force, and harassed them by constant attacks. Two or three actions took place, in all of which the Irish behaved with great gallantry, and succeeded in repulsing

the enemy; but from the nature of the country, and the want of cavalry, they were unable to take advantage of their success. Montilla, finding the execution of his attempt impracticable, was at length under the necessity of retracing his steps to Rio Hacha; and the Irish soldiers, who had not had time to attain much perfection either in subordination or discipline, becoming dissatisfied with this mode of warfare, here began to grow very refractory.

Brion and Montilla, who were not accustomed to the management of such turbulent spirits, and had neither of them ever manifested any particular partiality for Englishmen, became now very desirous of getting rid of them; and, partly by persuasion, and partly by threats of force, got the greater part of them on board of some English vessels in the harbour, and obliged the captains to convey them to Jamaica. On their arrival at Kingston, most of the officers and all the unfortunate men were in a very distressed situation: liberal assistance was, however, afforded them by the merchants of that city, and some few of them succeeded in obtaining employment; but they were, in general, a class of persons not wanted in the island; and, after considerable difficulty to determine how to dispose of them, they were at last again shipped off, at the expense of the cor-

poration of Kingston, for the British settlements in Canada, and nothing more has been heard of them. The small number who remained at Rio Hacha, amounting to about one hundred, accompanied Montilla to Savanilla, and were afterwards employed in the siege of Carthagena, where they distinguished themselves by the gallantry with which, after the total dispersion of the Patriot army, they rallied and repulsed a sortie of the garrison: and the few who survived the siege were afterwards incorporated in the battalion of Carabobo. About two hundred of this legion had followed the main body from Europe, and been sent up the Orinoco, where they joined the English legion, previous to the battle of Carabobo.

General D'Evereux, and his staff, arrived at Margarita about two months after his troops had embarked for Rio Hacha, and immediately followed them thither; owing, however, to the events which had taken place, he could gain no tidings of them, and stood over to Jamaica to seek information, where he first learnt the unfortunate fate of his expedition. After staying a short time at Kingston, the General went over to Colombia, but he never was engaged in any active service: the government, however, behaved very honourably to him, and admitted the full amount of his claims for the equipment, and other expenses of his expe-

dition; they have since been paid, and he has now returned to Europe, having realized an ample fortune by the part he has taken in the cause of South American independence.

In these different expeditions, at least six thousand British subjects left their native shores to engage in this contest, which, from its nature and character, was so well calculated to impose upon the judgment, and dazzle the imagination of the young and the adventurous. The men were for the most part veteran soldiers, and many of the officers had borne rank in the service of their country, and were men of talent and respectability, who, when their services were no longer required at home, embarked in this cause, with the laudable desire of improving their condition in life by the honourable exercise of their profession: others, carried away by the ardour and enthusiasm of youth, embraced this opportunity of commencing their military career, little prepared for the dangers and hardships which awaited them; and, perhaps, some few, actuated by less disinterested motives, entered this service for the purposes of gain, or of liberating themselves from embarrassments which beset them in their native country. But, whatever were their several motives, a similar fate has overtaken nearly the whole of them; for, at the close of the year 1823, not more than

one hundred and sixty of the men survived, who were all collected in the battalion of Carabobo, and served still to give a character to the regiment, although it was then filled up with natives. It is not easy to ascertain the number of officers who have escaped the general destruction, as several have at different times returned home; and, besides those remaining in the battalion of Carabobo, there are still some few serving in the native regiments, but I should not think the number of survivors exceeds half that of the survivors amongst the men.

Of the gallant spirits who have thus fallen sacrifices to the establishment of the independence of Colombia, few have fallen by the sword; for, except at the battle of Carabobo, where the British regiment left one-third of its number on the field, they suffered little from the enemy; fatigue, privations, and the climate, thinned their ranks, and in so short a time caused such a reduction of their numbers. The Creoles of the country suffered likewise, nearly in the same proportion; and to this extraordinary waste of human life is to be attributed the extreme depopulation of the country; for their armies, of which so much has been heard in Europe, have seldom exceeded two or three thousand men.

The conduct of Bolivar to the foreigners in his

service has been uniformly marked by kindness and attention to their wants: his ardent temperament, on all great emergencies, required exertions and sacrifices from his troops; and the British were never so well satisfied, as when called upon, on such occasions, to execute his orders; but in the tedious marches and miserable bivouacs in the woods and plains of Colombia—always without shelter, and frequently without food—they ever found him an indulgent and considerate commander. From some of the inferior chiefs, foreigners have not always experienced similar treatment, particularly those who were placed in Creole battalions; but of Bolivar and the government no one has cause to complain. During the early part of the war, the government had indeed rarely the means of paying any part of its troops; but as soon as an improvement in their circumstances gave them the opportunity, they honourably redeemed the pledge given to their foreign defenders, by accounting for their arrears of pay, and making them a liberal compensation for their services, in proportion to their respective ranks.

CHAPTER III.

Union of New Granada and Venezuela—Republic of Colombia—Its constitution—Laws relative to commerce and finance—Encouragement to Settlers—Agricultural Company—Exclusive Privileges—Steam-boats on the Magdalena—the Orinoco—the lake of Maracaybo—Sociedad Emprendadora.

It has been already observed, that, so early as the year 1811, a constitution had been framed for the government of the Republic of Venezuela, which had been rendered nugatory by the disasters which had subsequently befallen the Patriots in that country; and that after they had again succeeded in driving the enemy from the capital, a species of dictatorship had been conferred on Bolivar. He discharged the military and civil duties of this arduous situation with ability and moderation; but, being constantly engaged in active service, he found it necessary, after the capture of the city of Angostura, to assemble a congress in that place, and establish a provisional government, in which he vested a considerable portion of his authority.

In the early part of 1821, this government, finding its armies in possession of nearly the whole of

New Granada, and the greater part of Venezuela, removed its seat to Cúcuta, a town situated near the boundary line of the two countries; and having assembled a new congress, proceeded to pass, on the 12th July, 1821, a fundamental law, constituting the two states of New Granada and Venezuela into one single national body, entitled the Republic of Colombia. In the preamble to this law, the following reasons were given for the adoption of such a resolution :—

First, That the provinces of New Granada and Venezuela, united into one republic, possess in all their extent the means of raising themselves to the highest pitch of power and prosperity.

Secondly, That in constituting themselves into separate republics, however close the bonds may be by which they are united, far from being able to improve so many advantages, they would find it difficult to consolidate their sovereignty, and cause it to be respected.

Thirdly, That, intimately convinced of these advantages, all men of superior talent and enlightened patriotism had urged the governments of the two republics to agree to this union, which the vicissitudes of the war had hitherto prevented from being carried into effect.

Finally, That the considerations of reciprocal interest and individual necessity, above explained,

induced the congress of Venezuela to anticipate this measure, which was virtually pronounced by the constant wishes manifested by both countries.

Amongst other articles of this fundamental law, it was decreed,—

That the people of New Granada and Venezuela shall remain united in one single national body, under the express compact, that their government now is, and shall be, for ever after, a popular and representative one.

That the Colombian nation is for ever, and irrevocably, free and independent of the Spanish Monarchy, as well as of all other foreign power and dominion whatever. Neither is it, nor can it be, the patrimony of any family or person.

That the present congress of Colombia shall frame the constitution of the Republic conformably to the bases above set forth, and according to the liberal principles which the wise practice of other nations has rendered sacred.

That the debts contracted by the two countries separately are acknowledged *in solidum*, as a national debt of Colombia, and the whole property of the republic shall be held answerable for their payment; and that the congress, in such manner as they may deem fit, shall appropriate to the payment thereof, the most productive branches of the public revenue, and shall also create a special

sinking-fund for the purpose of redeeming the principal, or paying the interest thereon, as soon as the said debts are liquidated.

In conformity with the article which provides for the future government of the country, a constitution was framed and published on the 20th of August following, which forms the present political code of the country. This constitution is, in most respects, similar to that of the United States of North America, which seems to have served as a model for the imitation of the legislators of the infant republic of Colombia. They were, however, resolved upon trying their hands at amendment, and have accordingly introduced an alteration in the mode of electing the representatives of the people, which is not unlikely to produce effects altogether subversive of the popularity of the representative form of government which they have professed to establish. This innovation did not, however, originate with them, for it formed part of the complicated movements with which the constitution of the Spanish cortes had clogged the operation of the representative part of their system: this latter body, indeed, however desirous they might be of putting some restraint upon the absolute power of the crown, seem never to have intended to admit the people to any participation in political power; and for the purpose of their

exclusion, introduced these shackles upon the elective privilege, which are little adapted to the spirit of a republican government.

For the purpose of more fully explaining the plan they have adopted, I shall lay before the reader such articles of the constitution as refer to this subject.

Art. 12. In each parish, whatever may be its population, a parochial assembly shall be held on the last Sunday in July, in every fourth year.

Art. 13. The parochial assembly shall be composed of the parochial voters, not deprived of suffrage, inhabiting each parish; and over it shall preside the judge or judges of the parish, assisted by four witnesses of respectability, enjoying the qualifications of a parochial voter.

Art. 14. The judges, without waiting for any orders, are indispensably bound to convene the same, at the periods above stated, on such day as the constitution may determine.

Art. 15. To be a parochial voter, it is requisite, First, To be a Colombian; Secondly, To be married, or above twenty-one years of age; Thirdly, To be able to read and write; this condition, however, shall not be peremptory till the year 1840; Fourthly, To be owner of fixed property to the clear amount of one hundred dollars; the want

thereof may be supplied by the exercise of some trade, profession, commerce, or useful kind of industry, such person being a housekeeper, or having an established workshop, provided he is not dependent on another, in the character of journeyman or servant.

Art. 16. The qualification of parochial voter is lost; First, By accepting employment from another government without permission of the congress; by holding employment with a salary, or by administering any other trust under that of Colombia; Secondly, By any sentence imposing inflictive or degrading punishment, unless the disability be previously removed; Thirdly, By having sold his vote, or bought that of another for himself, or for a third person, whether it be in the primary assemblies, the electoral ones, or in any other.

Art. 17. The qualification of parochial voter is suspended; First, In idiots, lunatics, or madmen; Secondly, In bankrupt debtors and vagrants, declared to be such; Thirdly, In persons under indictment by criminal process, till they have been acquitted, or condemned to punishment, neither inflictive nor degrading; Fourthly, In debtors to the public revenue, after the term for payment is expired.

Art. 18. The object of the parochial assembly

is to vote for the elector or electors corresponding to the canton,

Art. 19. The province entitled to one representative only, shall name ten electors, the nomination of whom is to be distributed among the cantons therein contained, in proportion to the population of each.

Art. 20. The province entitled to name two or more representatives, shall have as many electors as will correspond to the cantons composing the same, each canton being bound to choose one elector for every four thousand souls, and one more for a surplus of three thousand. Every canton, although it may not amount to the aforesaid number, shall nevertheless have one elector.

Art. 21. To be an elector, it is requisite, First, To be a parochial voter, not disqualified; Secondly, To be able to read and write; Thirdly, To be above twenty-five years of age, and an inhabitant of any one of the parishes of the canton in which the elections are about to take place; Fourthly, To be the owner of fixed property, amounting to the clear value of five hundred dollars, or in the enjoyment of a situation yielding an annual income of three hundred dollars, or an incumbent of property producing an annual income of three hundred dollars; to profess some science, or to hold a scientific degree.

Art. 22. Each parochial voter shall vote for the elector or electors of the canton, by publicly naming the person for whom he votes, which shall be punctually entered, in his own presence, in the return-books kept exclusively for this purpose.

Art. 24. The elections shall be public; and when they are in progress no one shall be allowed to wear arms.

Art. 30. The electoral assembly is composed of the electors named by the cantons.

Art. 31. On the first day of October, in every fourth year, the electoral assembly shall meet in the capital of the province, and proceed to make all the elections corresponding to the same, two-thirds, at least, of the electors being present. At this meeting, the municipality of the capital shall preside, till the assembly has elected a president from among its own members, who shall be the person having the greatest number of votes.

Art. 33. The appointment of elector shall continue for four years. The vacancies shall be filled, when necessary, by those that follow next in the number of votes.

Art. 34. The functions of the electoral assemblies are: To vote, First, for the president of the republic: Secondly, for the vice-president of the same: Thirdly, for the senators of the department:

Fourthly, for the representative or representatives deputed from the province.

Art. 36. To be the representative of a province, it is requisite to have obtained an absolute majority; that is, one vote over and above the half of all the electors who have assisted at the election.

Art. 37. The representatives shall be nominated one by one, at a permanent sitting, and those shall be declared as elected who may obtain the majority above stated. If no one should have obtained it, the two persons who have attained the highest numbers shall proceed to a second ballot, and he shall be the representative who obtains the majority of votes. Cases of equality shall be decided by lot.

Art. 85. Each province shall elect one representative for every thirty thousand souls of the population it may contain; but if, after the calculation of the latter has been made, there should remain a surplus of fifteen thousand souls, another representative shall be allowed for it; and every province, whatever may be its population, shall nominate, at least, one representative. The present congress, by means of a decree, shall determine the number of the representatives which each province is to nominate, until a new census is made of the population.

Art. 86. This proportion of one for every thirty thousand shall continue to be the rule for the representation, until the number of representatives reaches one hundred; and although the population increases, the number shall not, on that account, be augmented, but the proportion shall be raised, till one representative corresponds to each forty thousand souls. In this state, the proportion of one, for every forty thousand souls, shall continue, till the representatives amount to one hundred and fifty, and then, as in the preceding case, the proportion shall be advanced to fifty thousand for one.

It will be seen, from this abstract of the law relative to the election of the persons who are called the representatives of the people, that the constitution has been careful to provide against any undue influence on the part of the government, and has likewise endeavoured to prevent corrupt practices in the exercise of the elective franchise: the interposition, however, of the body which they designate by the title of electors, between the people and the representative, cuts off at once that connexion between the latter and his constituents, and that dependence upon their good opinion and approbation of his public conduct, which seems to be the very essence of a popular and representative government. In

such a country as Colombia, where the mass of the population are in a state of the most abject poverty, a majority of the people are excluded, by the restrictions of the 14th article, from any participation in the elective privilege; and the congress seems to have been of opinion, that the remainder were endowed with the portion of discernment, which enabled them to know who ought to elect their representatives, but which was not sufficient to render them fit to be entrusted with their direct nomination. The small number, likewise, of these electors, the duration of their office, and the length of time which elapses between their appointment and the first exercise of their electoral functions, will, when the situations of senator and representative have become objects of greater competition than they are at present, necessarily render the electors liable to be assailed by temptations, which their virtue may be unable to resist; and it is to be feared that, in process of time, the democratical spirit of the constitution will evaporate, and re-appear condensed in one of those modifications of oligarchy, which have in all ages been so hostile to the liberties of mankind.

The two last articles which I have quoted have been copied into their constitution from that of the United States; they have indeed been adopted in all the forms of representative government

which have appeared of late years, and form a self-regulating principle, to preserve the uniform motion of the political machine, and prevent those anomalies, which have caused so much discussion and irritation in the state, whose ancient and venerable institutions so many other parts of their constitutions have closely imitated.

The union of the two provinces of New Granada and Venezuela into one republic, and the centralization of its government, had been always ardently desired by Bolivar. We have before seen that he had constantly evinced a disinclination to the federative system; and as he had been appointed to the chief command of the armies of both countries, and had been principally instrumental in the establishment of their independence, although a Venezuelian, he naturally felt a strong interest in the future welfare of them both; and in this feeling he would not have been able so satisfactorily to indulge, in the event of their separation into two distinct states. The eminent services he had rendered them necessarily gave his wishes and opinions considerable influence; and, at the same time, national vanity made the members of the congress desirous of placing their new country in what they considered an imposing attitude in the eyes of the world, or, as they themselves expressed it, of "consolidating their sovereignty, and causing

it to be respected," and had probably its effect in inducing them to agree to these measures. It may, however, be remarked, that neither this consolidation of the governments of the two states, nor indeed every part of the constitution itself, met, on this occasion, with the unanimous approbation of the country: for the municipality of Caraccas, the most enlightened and important city in the whole country, boldly protested against the measure; and it is of importance, at the present moment, to revert to this circumstance, as it shows that the recent conduct of the leading cities of Venezuela has originated from deeper feelings than sympathy with the momentary irritation of a military chief.

It is not, indeed, at all evident, that this union increases their means of "raising themselves to prosperity," for it does not arise from their mutual necessities, but is rather an arbitrary connexion forced upon them, in spite of their natural limits; nor does it seem materially to assist them in their defence against foreign aggression, since the advantage of the increase of force they may derive from it, is fully counterbalanced by the number of vulnerable points presented by their more extended line of coast; and with respect to the "high pitch of power" to which they aspire, they are greatly deceived if they imagine that they have

either jointly or separately the means of making any display of it out of their own territory. At the same time, the vast extent of the republic, and the distance of the capital from every part of its frontiers, occasion continual embarrassment and inconvenience to the individuals who may have occasion to communicate with the government, or receive its orders; and require a vigorous arm in the government itself, to maintain its authority and enforce obedience to its decrees. The difficulties, likewise, which under any circumstances would present themselves from these causes, to the operations of a republican government, are greatly increased by the total inexperience of all parties in every branch of its practical administration.

With respect to the central form of government established by the constitution, it may be observed, that a very short experience seems to have convinced the majority of the Colombian nation, that it has not been productive of the beneficial effects which its advocates had anticipated. It was, at the time of its adoption, urged in its favour, that it would be difficult to hold a federation of republican states in a common bond of union, before they had attained an equality in civilisation and political knowledge; that such a system necessarily pre-supposed a greater diffusion of talent and intelligence in the country than has actual existence, to enable them

to undertake the management of their internal government, and conduct its administration with sufficient vigour to ensure the tranquillity of the federation, and throw upon the general congress the burthen of such affairs only as regarded the public interests of the confederated states. It was admitted, that the United States of North America afforded an illustrious example of the power and prosperity to which the federal system might raise a state; but it was to be remembered, that before its separate states formed part of the present confederation, they had been already habituated to all the details of internal government; whilst, in Colombia, one of the first cares of the general government would have been, not only to legislate for each particular state, but likewise to superintend or enforce the execution of its decrees. It could not, however, be denied, that a federative government would have been attended with the advantage of diminishing, or in a great measure obviating, the inconveniencies so generally felt from the great extent of the territory of Colombia, and which already threaten the destruction of the fabric which has been raised at the expense of so many sacrifices.

By Art. 156 of the Constitution, it is provided, That all Colombians have the right of freely writing, printing, and publishing their thoughts and

opinions, without the necessity of any examination, revision, or censorship, previous to publication. Those, however, who commit any abuse of this inestimable freedom, shall incur the punishment which they have deserved, conformably to the laws.

And, by Art. 175, That one of the first cares of the congress shall be to introduce, in certain kinds of suits, the trial by jury; so that the advantages of this institution being made practically known, it may be extended to all criminal and civil cases to which it is usually applied in other nations, with all the forms adapted to this mode of procedure.

By the first of these articles, and by a subsequent law passed in the first session of the Congress, the freedom of the press is established throughout Colombia; and, by the second, preparation is made for the introduction of trial by jury. The first acts of the republican government evinced, therefore, a disposition to provide the citizens of Colombia with two of the strongest bulwarks against the inroads of future despotism; and it is to be hoped that, whatever form the government itself may assume, successive legislators will continue the glorious work, and erect upon these solid foundations a firm and durable superstructure of liberty.

The judicial branch of the Colombian govern

ment is, however, as yet, in an unorganized and defective state; for although superior courts of justice have been established in the departments, and facilities given to appeals from the inferior jurisdictions, the civil and penal codes of Spain still remain in force, and their despotic and arbitrary spirit is felt in all the relations of social life. Until a reform takes place in this important point, the mass of the people will experience little of the real blessings of freedom; *somos independientes, pero no somos libres,* (we are independent, but we are not free,) is an expression frequently heard amongst the most enlightened portion of the community, and unfortunately it is founded in truth.

It is likewise worthy of remark, and at the same time a subject of regret, that no mention is made of ecclesiastical affairs throughout the constitution, as it might have been expected that, amongst a people who had overcome so many other obstacles to liberty, there would have been found liberality or courage enough to have boldly proclaimed the principles of religious toleration. Until they have taken this step they will never attain to the dignity of a free people. They have as yet made little advance in this respect beyond the intolerant bigotry of Spain: they have indeed admitted the stranger into their land, and do not persecute him for a difference of religious opinion; but the public

exercise of his worship is forbidden him, if it is other than that of the Roman Catholic church: the only relaxation of this principle of intolerance has been in the permission granted, by the late treaty with Great Britain, to the subjects of that power, to assemble in their private dwelling-houses for worship according to the rites of their church. It is in vain for these people to hold out inducements to emigration till they have remedied this radical defect in their constitution: some of the most industrious and useful emigrants to the northern continent of America were from the protestant states of Europe; and these are for the most part a very religious people, whom no prospects of temporal advantage would induce to fix their residence in a country where they were restricted from worshipping the Deity after the manner of their forefathers.

It is, however, but justice to the exertions of the Colombian Congress to state, that, during the sessions which have been held since the publication of their constitution, they have enacted a great number of laws calculated to improve the moral and political state of the country, and to establish maxims of policy founded upon the principles of liberty and social happiness.

At the close of the first session of congress, its acts were published under the authority of the

government; and a translation of them was also published in London, by Señor Ravenga, the late Colombian minister in this country. This publication was to have been continued regularly, at the close of every session; but some delay has taken place, and I believe the second volume has not yet appeared. Having, however, access to a file of the Colombian papers, in which all the acts of the government are published, I have extracted from it, and the translation of Señor Ravenga, such of these acts as relate to the finances of the country and its external relations; and I present them to the public, as documents which may convey to some persons useful information, and, at the same time, afford the surest grounds for the formation of a correct judgment of the resources and actual feeling of the government of that country.

In the first session of Congress, held in the year 1821, the following laws were enacted, viz.—

A Law respecting the Freedom of the future Offspring of Slaves, their Manumission, and the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

It states, that, following the eternal principles of reason, justice, and the most sound policy, a republican government, really just and philanthropic, cannot exist, unless it endeavours to al-

leviate, in all the classes of the state, degraded and suffering humanity; and that an object of such great importance to the republic ought to be realized, by gradually abolishing slavery, in such manner, that, without endangering the public tranquillity, or impairing the rights which the owners thereof really possess, the result may be such, that, within a few years, the whole of the inhabitants of Colombia may be free; it therefore decrees,—

That the children of female slaves born subsequently to the day of the publication of the present law, in the capitals of the provinces, shall be free.

That the owners of slaves shall be under the peremptory obligation of educating, clothing, and supporting the children of all such female slaves, born subsequently to the day of the publication of the present law; but, in return, the latter shall be held to indemnify the masters of their mothers for the expenses of bringing them up, by labour and service—which they shall be bound to perform till they have passed their eighteenth year.

That it shall not be lawful to sell any slaves to be sent out of the province in which they reside—thus separating the children from their parents: this prohibition, however, shall only be in force until the children have attained the age of puberty.

That the sale of slaves intended to be conveyed out of the territory of Colombia is peremptorily prohibited; and, in like manner, also, the taking away of slaves for the purposes of sale.

That the importation of slaves, whatever may be the manner in which it is done, is totally prohibited; and, accordingly, no person shall be allowed to bring with him, as a domestic servant, more than one slave, whom it shall not be lawful to sell in the country; and, on his arrival in the ports of Colombia, due notice shall be given to the importer thereof, of the obligation he is under to convey the said slave away, for which he shall be held to give suitable securities.

All slaves imported contrary to the prohibition of this law shall, by the act itself, be considered free.

That a fund shall be established for the manumission of slaves, composed,—

First, Of a rate equal to three per cent, to be levied, for this humane object, on the fifth part of the property of those who die, leaving lawful descendants.

Secondly, Three per cent. also to be levied on the third part of the property of persons dying, and leaving legitimate progenitors.

Thirdly, three per cent. on the total property of persons dying, and leaving collateral heirs.

And, *Fourthly*, ten per cent. to be paid out of the total property of persons dying, and bequeathing the same to those not of kin.

That annually on the 25th, 26th, and 27th days of December, the same as are devoted to the national festivities, the board of manumission for each district shall liberate as many slaves as they are able with the funds in hand. Their price shall be paid over to the owners, according to the valuation of intelligent persons, those being chosen for manumission who are the most honest and industrious.

That, when there are no slaves in the canton or province, the funds shall be destined by the head of the department, to the manumission of slaves belonging to another province; if there should be none in the whole department, the president of the republic shall point out the slaves who are to be manumitted with the funds above alluded to.

By a subsequent law of the same session, it was declared,—

That slaves may be admitted into the military service, under such agreements and conditions as the government may think proper to make and impose; the owners thereof being indemnified preferably out of such funds as may be collected for the purposes of manumission.

A Law by which the Duties were abolished which had hitherto been exacted from Persons digging for, or otherwise collecting Gold, usually called "Mazzamorreros," who, in future, shall pay nothing for exercising this branch of industry.

A Law respecting the Direct Contribution.

It states, that considering that it is the duty of the representative body of the nation to provide the necessary funds for the maintenance of the armies so gloriously fighting for the independence of the republic, as well as to support the other branches of the administration,—that the common and ordinary branches of the revenue not being at present sufficient to defray the expenses aforesaid, it would be necessary, in order to cover the deficit, to recur to extraordinary contributions, which, as they must be collected within a short period, harass the people, and render it impossible to observe that equality, so essential in the levying of taxes; and that, on several contributions burdensome to the people being suppressed or amended, prudence dictates the necessity of those being established which are the most productive, without checking the industry and talents of the citizens, so that they may be able to devote themselves to all the branches of commerce and agriculture the congress decrees,—

That a tax shall be levied on the incomes and profits of the citizens, throughout the whole territory of Colombia, under the name of *directcontribution.*

That, excepting public edifices, no class of productive, fixed, or moveable property, stock, annuities, capitals, or incomes, shall be exempt from paying that portion of charge assessed by the present law.

That the real value of lands, plantations, sugar estates, and other establishments thereunto annexed, being valued, the net income shall be estimated at five per cent. per annum.

That the net income derived from productive moveable property, stock, and capitals, employed in mines, manufactures, and other similar objects, shall also be calculated at five per cent.

That capitals employed in trade shall be estimated as producing six per cent. as an annual income, and those placed out to interest shall pay according to the yearly income therefrom derived.

That, of all incomes arising out of productive, fixed, and moveable property, stock, annuities, and capitals, as above determined, the yearly contributions shall be one-tenth part.

That all kinds of incomes from fixed or eventual salaries, or those arising out of personal industry,

and not amounting to one hundred and fifty dollars per annum, shall not be liable to assessment: from the latter sum, as far as one thousand dollars, the same shall pay two per cent., and from one thousand dollars upwards, three per cent. on the amount exceeding the first sum.

That no person, whose property does not amount to one hundred dollars, shall pay any sum on account of this contribution.

In the year which ended in July, 1825, this tax produced the sum of 194,558 dollars; but the minister of finance, in his last report to the Congress, anticipates an improvement in this branch of revenue, which will raise it in the present year to 3,100,000. By the present year, I mean that which terminated in July, 1826, as the produce of its revenue will form the subject of the report of the minister to the ensuing Congress; and in the laws relative to finance, I shall, where an improvement is anticipated, state the amount of each of these sums, notwithstanding their necessary mutability from year to year, as by comparing them with the nature of the tax by which they are levied, an additional criterion will be furnished for forming an opinion of the present state of the country.

A Law respecting the Alcabala Duty.

It states that, considering that the revenue derived from the Alcabala duty, as levied and collected under the Spanish system, is one of the most burdensome and prejudicial to the industry and commerce of the country, in consequence of the numerous obstacles it opposes to both, of the hardships it brings upon the people, and of the great expenses attending its collection, it is decreed;—

That the Alcabala duty of five per cent. levied on property sold, shall be suppressed, and in its stead shall be substituted a rate of two and a half per cent., which shall only be paid on all and each of the sales made of foreign effects and merchandise, as well as on those of fixed property.

The Alcabala duty was originally a tax granted by the Cortes of Spain to their kings to assist them in their wars against the Moors; and was afterwards established as an impost in America, towards the end of the sixteenth century. It was levied on all descriptions of property sold, whether real or personal, and the vexations to which it gave rise greatly impeded the activity of commerce between the different provinces of the Spanish dominions in America.

During the last session of Congress, this tax underwent a further modification, and is now only imposed on sales of real property; it produced last year 119,902 dollars.

A Law respecting the Abolition of the Government Monopoly of Spirituous Liquors, and the Regulation of the Duties on Distillation, enacts,—

That the distillation and commerce of spirituous liquors shall henceforward be free; and that it shall be lawful for private individuals to make and prepare them, without any other restrictions than those imposed by the present law.

That, in all the districts of Colombia, a register book shall be kept of all those persons who may be authorised to distil spirituous liquors.

That every person wishing to distil shall apply to the political judge of the canton, soliciting an authority for that purpose.

That, for every still or vessel capable of distilling one cántara (four gallons) of spirituous liquor at one operation, two and a half dollars shall be paid per month; five dollars for those capable of distilling two, and in the larger ones the same proportion shall be followed; should the size of the still or vessel be less than one cántara, the two and a half dollars shall nevertheless be paid.

That persons wishing to sell by retail, shall previously obtain a permit from the political judge, therein stating the shop, tavern, or hotel in which it is intended to carry on the sale.

That all persons wishing to sell spirituous liquors by retail shall pay two dollars per month for each shop, tavern, or hotel in which the sales are made.

This tax produced last year 60,563 dollars.

The estimate for the present year is 100,000 dollars.

A Law respecting Stamped Paper.

It states that, considering that the stamp duty is one of the least burdensome to the people, and that the existing exigencies of the state require not only that it should be retained, but also that it should be rendered more productive, it is decreed,

That the use of stamped paper shall continue in all the courts of law and civil tribunals of the Republic; and, as heretofore, four stamps shall be adopted, viz. first, second, third, and fourth.

That the first stamp shall be divided into four classes; that the value of the first class shall be twenty-four dollars; that of the second, eighteen; that of the third, twelve; and of the fourth, six dollars.

That the first stamp and first class shall be used

in drawing up writings relating to contracts and bonds, as well as all sentences and judicial acts in suits for sums exceeding eight thousand dollars.

That of the second class shall be used for all writings, sentences, and judicial acts relating to contracts, bonds, and suits, for sums exceeding four thousand dollars.

That of the third class shall be used for writings, sentences, and judicial acts relating to contracts, bonds, and suits, for sums exceeding two thousand dollars; and that of the fourth, for similar writings where the sum does not amount to one thousand dollars.

On paper of the first stamp and fourth class, shall also be made out all commissions and diplomas, the income of which is not less than five hundred dollars; on that of the third class, when the same exceeds one thousand five hundred dollars; on that of the second class, when the income is not less than three thousand dollars; and on that of the first class, whenever the same exceeds the aforesaid amount.

That the diplomas of lawyers, notaries public, and all kinds of functionaries, the proceeds of whose employment are casual, shall be made out on paper of the first stamp and fourth class.

That the value of paper of the second stamp shall be three dollars, and it shall be used for all

writings, sentences, and judicial acts not amounting to one thousand dollars, and above one hundred; and generally, for all wills, protests, registers of vessels, commissions of public functionaries with a fixed income of less than five hundred dollars, as well as for all public instruments in which no net amount, or determined price or sum is specified.

That the value of the sheet of the third stamp shall be four rials, and it shall serve for all kinds of certificates, memorials, petitions, writings, or affairs transacted or presented in the tribunals of the republic, whether the same are contentious or not.

That the value of the sheet of the fourth stamp shall be one rial, and of it use shall be made in commercial books, registers, books of notarial acts and original agreements, as well as in certificates issued by municipalities and corporations.

That all commercial books not made of paper of the fourth stamp shall, in the first page, have a certificate from the commissioner for the sale of stamped paper, showing that the amount of one rial, corresponding to each blank sheet of which the said commercial books are composed, has been duly paid, under a penalty, equal to four times the amount of the sum defrauded, applicable to the public revenue.

That the third and fourth stamps shall be allowed to be sold in half sheets at the rate of only one-half of the price corresponding to the whole sheet.

That all contracts, bonds, writings, certificates, acts, books, commissions, and other public instruments, which are not made out on paper bearing the stamps of the respective classes established in the preceding articles, shall be invalid and of no force and effect, either in law or equity, except wills, which, when made out on blank paper, shall pay to the national revenue the corresponding value.

The produce of this tax is estimated at 60,000 dollars.

A Law respecting the Alienation of Waste Lands.

It states that, considering that one of the first duties of the government is to encourage agriculture by every means in its power; that the sale of waste lands, at reasonable and fair prices, must powerfully contribute to this important object; and that the proceeds of these sales are moreover necessary to meet the immense expenses and outgoings to which the public revenue is liable, it is decreed,—

That it shall hereafter be lawful, in the maritime provinces, as well as in those of the interior,

to sell all waste lands which have not been previously granted to any one, or which, having been so granted, have, by composition, devolved to the possession of the republic, according to the provisions contained in the preceding laws.

That the *fanegada* (about two and a half acres English) of waste land in the maritime provinces, shall be sold at the rate of two dollars of the current coin, and at the rate of one dollar in those of the interior.

That if the situation and fertility of waste lands, combined with their proximity to the coasts, lakes, navigable rivers, and towns, increase their importance and advantages, they shall be valued by experienced persons, and public notices posted up for the period of thirty days, announcing their sale by public auction; and the property thereof shall be declared in favour of that person who offers a price nearest to the valuation, and not under that which is determined by law.

That persons wishing to purchase waste lands shall apply to the governors of the provinces in which the said lands are situated, pointing out their locality, the rivers and streams by which they are watered, and which, by right or title, do not belong to any other person.

The sale of lands last year produced 4,477 dollars.

In the session of the congress in 1823, entitled, "The First Constitutional Congress,"—

A Law was passed to induce Emigrants from Europe or the United States to settle in Colombia.

In its preamble it states, That a numerous population, proportionate to the extent of a country, is the foundation of its prosperity, and of its true grandeur; that the population of the republic of Colombia has never corresponded to the vast extent of its territory, in consequence of the barbarous system adopted by the Spanish government, in first exterminating the indigenous race, and afterwards excluding the people of every other nation; and it has likewise been latterly greatly diminished by the destructive and desolating war which has ravaged it for thirteen years; and that the fertility of the soil, the salubrity of the climate, the extent of its waste lands, and the liberal institutions of the republic, permit and require the encouragement of useful and laborious settlers from other countries, who may improve their own fortunes, and at the same time augment the riches of the state, it has been decreed;—

That the executive, in the exercise of the powers entrusted to it by the constitution and the laws, and by the means established by the present

decree, shall do its utmost to induce foreigners from Europe and North America to settle in the country.

That, for this purpose, from two to three millions of fanegadas of lands belonging to the state shall be placed at its disposal, to be employed according to its judgment; but with the restriction that not more than two hundred fanegadas be given to any one family.

That, in the distribution of this land, the executive is not bound to the observance of the law now in force, respecting the alienation of waste lands.

That the executive shall make the necessary provisions respecting the situation, social establishment, and other regulations which may induce settlers to accept this offer, as well as relative to the exemptions which they shall enjoy.

That all the individuals composing these families, as soon as they have fixed their residence in the territory of Colombia, shall be considered as naturalized in the republic, and shall enjoy the rights of citizens, except such as are reserved by the constitution for the citizens by birth, or for those who have acquired rights by a residence of a certain number of years in the republic.

That the executive shall take care that these settlers are composed entirely, or for the greater

part, of labourers and artisans, and shall, at the next meeting of the legislature, give an account of the operations of this act.

In consequence of this law, the following decree was issued by the vice-president;—

Every foreigner who wishes to obtain land by virtue of the dispositions of the above law, shall present himself to the governor or intendant of the province in which he solicits the grant, signifying to what nation he belongs, the number of his family, his profession or occupation, and that which he in future intends to follow.

The governor or intendant shall point out to him the situations where there are waste lands, that he may choose where he will fix himself; and having determined upon the spot, the lands shall be measured by a surveyor appointed by the governor, and a plan shall be made of them as soon as possible.

These steps being taken, the foreigner shall signify the number of fanegadas he wishes to occupy, and the term within which he will commence their cultivation. The governor shall remit all the documents to the executive, and give such information on the subject as he may judge necessary; the government will then signify its refusal of the grant, or its concession on the conditions it may think proper to propose, and in the latter case

it will send an order to the governor to give a proper title to the favoured person (*al agraciado*), and put him in possession of the property.

The expenses of the surveyor and other persons employed in the measurement of the land, and of the necessary writings, shall be paid out of the purchase-money if the lands are sold, but if they are given by the government, the foreigner on whom the favour is conferred (*el estrangero agraciado*) shall pay them.

The government, considering the utility which may result to the republic from the establishment of a foreigner, according to the trade or profession he may follow, shall grant him such exemptions as it may think proper.

The governors shall proceed to people with foreigners who may come to Colombia the most useful waste lands in the neighbourhood of the ports and navigable rivers, placing them on elevated and healthy situations; they will likewise cause plans to be drawn up for the establishment of these settlements.

It is particularly recommended to them to protect the new colonists, by administering prompt justice on any emergency, and by giving them all the assistance possible, till such time as their establishment is completed.

In the Congress of 1821, laws had been passed for the regulation of the duties on imports and exports; they have, however, been virtually repealed by the following acts, passed during the last session of Congress.

A Law respecting the Duty on Imports.

All duties on entries, known heretofore under various denominations, shall in future be consolidated under one head, with the sole denomination of import duty.

For the easier levying of these duties, all merchandise and effects that may be imported, shall be classed under the following heads:—

Class 1st. Sheet tin, paper of all descriptions, all kinds of medical and surgical instruments, stores, ship-stores, cables, cordage, pitch and tar.

2nd. All kinds of cotton, woollen, linen, hempen and worsted goods, with exception of such particular ones as will be mentioned in a separate article.

3rd. Hats made of beaver, wool, cotton, or silk; wax and spermaceti, manufactured or in cake; all sorts of oils, gold and silver watches, men's and women's saddles, all kinds of earthenware from Europe, and crystals and glass of every description.

4th. Silks and all sorts of silk goods, the manufacture and production of Europe; jewels and precious stones; tanned leather, thread and silk lace, embroidered handkerchiefs, ornamental feathers, and all kinds of fans.

5th. Chattels and utensils made of silver, steel, and tin; dry and preserved fruits, olives, capers, and all kinds of foreign eatables and supplies.

6th. Crystal chandeliers, mirrors, all kinds of carriages, cards, umbrellas, men's and women's shoes and boots, all kinds of household furniture, ready-made clothes and dresses, artificial flowers, perfumery, essences, sweet-scented waters, and oils.

The goods described in class No. 1, shall, when imported from the colonies * in national vessels, pay an import duty of 15 per cent.; and from Europe or the United States of North America, 7½ per cent.; the same goods imported in foreign vessels, and proceeding from the colonies, shall pay a duty of 20 per cent.; and from Europe or the United States, 15 per cent.

The goods specified in Class 2, when imported in national vessels from the colonies shall pay 17½ per cent.; and from Europe and the United

* By "the colonies" are meant the different Islands belonging to European powers in the Caribbean Sea.

States, 10 per cent.; the same goods imported in foreign vessels from the colonies shall pay 22½ per cent.; and from Europe or the United States, 17½ per cent.

The goods specified in Class 3, imported in national vessels from the colonies, shall pay 20 per cent.; and from Europe or the United States, 12½ per cent.; the same goods in foreign vessels from the colonies, shall pay 25 per cent.; and from Europe or the United States, 20 per cent.

The goods specified in Class 4, imported in national vessels from the colonies, shall pay 22½ per cent.; and from Europe or the United States, 15 per cent.; the same goods in foreign vessels from the colonies, shall pay 27½ per cent.; and from Europe or the United States, 22½ per cent.

The goods specified in Class 5, imported in national vessels from the colonies, shall pay 25 per cent.; and from Europe or the United States, 17½ per cent.; the same goods in foreign vessels from the colonies, shall pay 30 per cent.; and from Europe or the United States, 25 per cent.

The goods specified in Class 6, imported in national vessels from the colonies, shall pay 30 per cent.; and from Europe or the United States, 25 per cent.; the same goods in foreign vessels from the colonies, shall pay 35 per cent.; and from Europe or the United States, 30 per cent.

All other descriptions of goods and merchandise not specified in the foregoing classes, shall (with the exception of such as are otherwise provided for by a following article) pay, if imported in national vessels from the colonies, 25 per cent.; if from Europe or the United States, 17½ per cent.; similar goods in foreign vessels from the colonies, shall pay 30 per cent.; and from Europe or the United States, 25 per cent.

All manufactured goods and merchandise, of whatsoever quality or description they may be, the natural productions of Asiatic nations and of European establishments in Asia, not dependent on the Spanish government, shall pay an import duty of 12 per cent., provided they are imported in national vessels, and proceed direct from those countries; and of 20 per cent. when not proceeding directly therefrom. If imported in foreign vessels, coming, either directly or indirectly, from Asia, they shall pay a duty of 25 per cent.

All merchandise and goods peculiar to the American continent which was formerly Spanish, proceeding direct from any of those independent nations, imported in national or foreign vessels, shall be entitled to the same reduction of duties as similar duties claim when imported from the United States; but such merchandise and goods as are not peculiar to that country, whether im-

ported in national or foreign vessels, and proceeding from the American continent, shall be subject to the same duties as they respectively pay, if coming from the colonies, unless it be otherwise provided for by special treaties.

Foreign vessels belonging to those nations that have formed commercial treaties with the republic, shall pay such duties as are provided for by the said treaties.

The import duty on all goods and merchandise, on which a specific duty is not fixed, shall be estimated in the following mode:—To the prime cost thereof, in the country whence they were exported for the ports of the republic, and which will be ascertained by the methods pointed out in a subsequent part of this law, when no invoices are presented, there shall be added 20 per cent., and the rate of duty shall be calculated on the amount.

The following goods and articles shall pay the specific duty herein assigned to each, in case the introduction be made in vessels proceeding from Europe or the United States.

Iron, in bars, sheets, or in any other unwrought state, two dollars the quintal (100 lbs.); wrought iron, six dollars the quintal; copper, in sheets, five dollars the quintal; Champagne and Madeira wines, in bottle, three dollars the dozen; Madeira wine in any other vessels, eighteen reals the

arroba (25 lbs.); red wines, in bottle, five reals the dozen; in any other vessels, six reals the arroba; sweet wines, in bottle, twelve reals the dozen; in any other vessel, ten reals the arroba; dry wines, in bottle, ten reals the dozen; in any other vessels, eight reals the arroba; spirituouls iquors made from the sugar-cane, and their several compositions, three dollars the arroba; spirituous liquors, made from the grape, from roots, fruits, grain, or other productions, in bottles, twenty reals the dozen; and in other vessels, two dollars the arroba; vinegar, in bottle, eight reals the dozen; in every other vessel, six reals the arroba; gin and hollands, in flasks, three dollars the dozen; in every other vessel, two dollars the arroba; liquors, in bottles, three dollars the dozen; cider, in bottle, six reals the dozen; in other vessels, eight reals the arroba; beer, in bottle, twelve reals the dozen; in other vessels, eight reals the arroba; salt beef, two dollars the quintal; smoked beef, twelve reals the quintal; ham, five dollars the quintal; salt pork, three dollars the quintal; smoked pork, twenty reals the quintal; all kinds of salt-fish, twelve reals the quintal; flour, in barrels of eight arrobas, three dollars the barrel; biscuits, three dollars the quintal; butter, two dollars the quintal; lard, two dollars the quintal; aniseed, six dollars the

quintal; salt, one dollar the quintal; every kind of gunpowder, eight dollars the quintal; snuff, four reals the bottle.

When the above goods are imported in national vessels from the colonies, they shall pay 5 per cent. more than these duties: when in foreign vessels from the colonies, 15 per cent.; and when from Europe or the United States, 7½ per cent. more than the above duties.

To prevent fraud by presenting a false invoice, the collector of the customs may open every tenth bale; and if the goods do not agree with the invoice, two competent persons, appointed in every port for that purpose, shall value such goods as the collector may point out. All bales of goods or merchandise not found on the invoice shall be confiscated.

These import duties are to be paid by two equal instalments, the first in three, the second in six months; and two securities must be given for the payment. A discount, of half per cent. per month, is to be allowed for immediate payment. (*March* 13, 1826.)

These duties produced last year 1,888,006 dollars; the estimate for the present year is 2,500,000 dollars.

A Law respecting the Exemption of certain Articles from Import Duties.

Considering that public instruction, and national agriculture, and industry, ought to be encouraged and promoted by every means possible, it is decreed,—

That the following articles shall be exempted from paying duties of importation in the ports of Colombia:

First, All books, in whatsoever language they may be printed; maps; geographical charts; philosophical instruments and apparatus, prints, paintings, statues, collections of antiquities, busts and medals.

Secondly, Implements of agriculture, plants, and seeds, together with all kinds of machinery, and utensils adapted for improving the cultivation of the soil, and for preparing and manufacturing the produce thereof.

Thirdly, All machinery and utensils, which may in any manner facilitate the digging for, and preparation of gold, silver, platina, quicksilver, copper, iron, steel, and of all other metals, semimetals, and minerals.

Fourthly, All machinery and utensils, which may contribute to improve the navigation of our lakes and rivers, as well as all those adapted to the improvement of our domestic manufactures in wool and cotton.

Fifthly, All instruments, utensils, and laboratories, belonging to citizens, or foreign professors of any liberal or mechanical art, who may arrive in the ports of the republic, to establish themselves in the territory thereof, and exercise their profession.

Sixthly, All machinery and apparatus belonging to printing, and all types and ink for printing.

Seventhly, All gold, silver, and other precious metals, coined, or in bars. (1821.)

A Law respecting the Duty on Exports.

Goods manufactured in the republic shall pay no export duty; nor coffee, bark, cotton, rice, maize, and other productions of the first necessity, nor money.

An export duty shall be paid on the following articles, at the rates affixed to each, viz. Cacao, 10 per cent., Indigo, 5 per cent., Hides, 10 per cent., Dye-woods, 5 per cent.; all other produce (not excepted as above) 4 per cent. upon the current prices of the place where the exportation takes place.

Mules shall pay an export duty of twenty dollars; horses, of sixteen; asses, of six; and horned cattle of twelve and a half dollars.

The export of platina, gold, and silver, in dust

or bar, is forbidden, except that which is produced from the mines of the department of the Isthmus or which is imported into that department from a foreign country, which may be exported on paying 3 per cent.

These duties produced last year 467,848 dollars; the estimate for the present year is 600,000 dollars. (9th *March*, 1826.)

By a law, passed the 24th May, 1826, certain ports of the republic are named, into which goods are allowed to be imported and bonded, subject to the payment of 4 per cent. per annum, during the time they remain in deposit. The ports on the Atlantic coast are Porto Cabello and Carthagena; on the Pacific, Guayaquil.

Foreign goods passing the Isthmus of Darien are to pay 2 per cent. transit duty on the invoice.

The following statement of the foreign vessels which entered the ports of Laguira and Porto Cabello, during the year ending 30th June, 1825, together with the value of the cargoes imported and exported, the duties thereon, and the articles exported, will enable the reader to form some estimate of the present trade of Colombia, as they are two of her principal ports, and the district whose produce is exported through them is as fertile and productive as any in the country:—

PORT OF LAGUIRA.

From	Ships.	Brigs.	Schooners.
England	1	11	5
France	0	7	1
Hanse Towns	0	6	1
United States	0	36	87
Colonies	1	6	37

	Dollars.
Value of cargoes imported	2,090,011
Duties	416,084
Value of cargoes exported	1,363,415
Duties	126,027

PORT OF PORTO CABELLO.

From	Ships.	Brigs.	Schooners.
England	0	3	2
France	0	1	0
United States	1	9	20
Colonies	0	4	61
Spanish Prizes	4	4	4

	Dollars.
Value of cargoes imported	1,056,283
Duties	242,558
Value of cargoes exported	541,300
Duties	49,665

ARTICLES EXPORTED.

	From Laguira.	From Porto Cabello.	
Cacao	25,683	10,704	fanegas *
Coffee	48,098	18,716	quintals †
Indigo	2,108	778	quintals
Cotton	495	152	quintals
Tobacco	42		quintals
Hides	18,309	14,138	

* The fanega is about one bushel English.

† The quintal, one hundred pounds.

To show the capability which this part of the country possesses of increasing its present produce, I subjoin the following account, given by Humboldt, of the trade of Laguira in the year 1796, the last in which the intercourse between Spain and her colonies was uninterrupted, previous to the revolution.

	Dollars.
Value of cargoes imported	3,480,060
Value of cargoes exported	2,403,254
Duties on imports and exports	587,317

The articles exported were—

Cacao	75,538 fanegas.
Coffee	4,847 quintals.
Indigo	7,380 quintals.
Cotton	5,372 quintals.
Tobacco	4,548 quintals.
Hides	81,308
Copper	31,142 pounds.

At that time the cultivation of coffee had only just been introduced into Venezuela.

In addition to the taxes and duties imposed by the above laws, the government derives a considerable income from the salt-works established at different points of the coast, from the great salt-mines of Cipaquirá, situated in the vicinity of Bogotá, and from the monopoly of tobacco.

The principal salt-works on the coast are those of the Punta de Araya, near Cumaná, and of the

Playa de Santa Martha. At each of these works a great quantity of the finest salt is procured in a crystallised form, at a very inconsiderable expense. The whole process is carried on by nature, it being nothing more than the washing of a muriatiferous soil by the rains which fall so abundantly at certain seasons in the tropical regions; the waters are collected by a gentle declivity of the surface of the plain into small and shallow lakes, which are thus filled with a saturated solution of salt, and the heat of the sun being sufficient to cause a rapid evaporation at their surface, crusts of salt are formed which fall to the bottom, and by the attraction which exists between similar crystals, chrystallised masses are collected, which are raked from the pool, and exposed to the sun's rays for a short time on its banks, previous to their being deposited in the stores. Stakes are likewise placed in the water, upon which these crystals deposit themselves, and accumulate in large masses of from twenty to thirty pounds in weight.

The muriatiferous soil at the Punta de Araya is a formation of a grey-coloured clay reposing on a calcareous sandstone; the muriate of soda which it contains is not visible to the eye, but may be procured from the clay by lixiviation. This formation of clay is here found on a level with the

ocean, and a similar formation occurs at the salt-mine of Cipaquirá, at a height of more than nine thousand feet above that level. The muriatiferous soil of Santa Martha is a sand impregnated with salt by the washing of the spray upon the beach, and the percolation of the salt water through the porous soil of the Playa. There are several other smaller salt-works at different parts of the coast, of which some belong to the government, and others are the property of individuals. The salt-mines of Cipaquirá are of great value and importance, as the whole of the table-land of New Granada, and many of the adjoining provinces, are supplied from them with this indispensable article. The different salt-works belonging to the government afforded last year a revenue of 187,904 dollars, and the minister anticipates an increase which will raise it for the present year to 300,000 dollars.

The monopoly of tobacco forms the most lucrative branch of the revenue of Colombia, but it is at the same time a sad memento of the despotism which so long harassed and impoverished these countries by this oppressive mode of taxation.

By the monopoly of the produce of this branch of the agriculture of the country, the government becomes the sole dealer in the article of tobacco, for the cultivation can only be carried on by persons approved of by it, and registered (*matricu-*

lados) for that purpose; and the whole produce must be brought into its depôts, and sold to its agents, at the price it thinks proper to fix. Under the Spanish government, the price given to the cultivator was twelve dollars the quintal, and it was re-sold to the consumer, at between forty and fifty dollars; at present, the price at which it is bought and re-sold by the government varies in different parts of the country: in the maritime provinces, the price given for tobacco of the first quality averages fifteen dollars the quintal, and in those of the interior, the average price is twelve dollars; it is sold to the consumer, in most parts of the country, at fifty dollars the quintal, and in some places the price is as high as sixty.

At the first establishment of the republican government, the whole of the monopolies which had existed in the time of the Spaniards were abolished; but, as a government so pressed for money as that of Colombia has hitherto been, found it inconvenient to relinquish so productive an impost as that of the monopoly of tobacco, it was soon resumed, with the ostensible object of its application to the liquidation of the public debt, and different laws were passed to give impulse and encouragement to this valuable branch of agriculture: they have, however, failed in producing the desired effect; and the cultivation

of this important produce of the country has so much diminished, that, instead of leaving, as formerly, a large surplus for exportation, it now scarcely suffices for its own consumption.

The minister of finance, in his last report to Congress, complains of the deficiency of this branch of the revenue; it appears that it did not, in the last year, amount to more than 859,066 dollars, a sum far short of what is expected from it, and of what it brought in under the former government. The calculation, however, which he makes of the amount which this tax would produce, under the improvement which he proposed to the Congress to make in its administration, is highly satisfactory; and it is interesting at the present moment to the holders of Colombian stock, since this part of the revenue forms a principal source of the fund exclusively appropriated, by a recent law of the Colombian government, to the payment of the interest of their foreign debt. He assumes, that the population of Colombia amounts to nearly three millions of persons; and from the general prevalence of the habit of smoking amongst all classes, with the exception only of the better order of females, he calculates that four-fifths of the population are consumers of this plant: on the supposition, therefore, that each of these persons spends a

little more than a dollar a year, in the purchase of this article, the annual consumption will amount to three millions of dollars, of which he allows that, after paying every expense, the government clears one-half. I think he has much under-rated the individual consumption, as no person who smokes at all, can possibly be content with so small a quantity as one dollar's worth, or about one hundred and fifty cigars in a year; and few persons, who have the means of procuring it, use less than ten times that quantity. It may, therefore, be safely calculated, that the produce of this tax ought to amount to more than two millions of dollars; a sum nearly adequate to the payment of the dividend upon the debt.

The causes to which the minister attributes this deficiency in the revenue of the tobacco monopoly, are the want of funds on the part of the government to enable it to supply the administrators of the different *Estancos* with money to purchase a sufficient quantity for the public consumption, and the excessive smuggling carried on in this article, arising partly from the inability of the government to make the necessary purchases, and partly from the price put upon the article being so disproportionate to its natural value. To promote the cultivation of the plant, and to correct the abuses which so materially diminish the profits of

the monopoly, he proposes to the government to allow the growers of tobacco a better price for their produce, and to arm the executive with more ample powers to suppress the present illegal practices. The first of these remedies will necessarily produce a good effect; but it will be still difficult to induce independent capitalists to engage in a cultivation, where they are prevented from taking their produce to the best market, and are, at the same time, subject, in all the detail of their operations, to the continual surveillance and interference of the officers of the revenue.

With respect to the contraband dealing in this article, it would be impossible, even for a government much more energetic than that of Colombia can be expected to be, altogether to prevent it, under the existence of the present unnatural and demoralizing system. Out of the loan raised in England, in 1824, a million of dollars were appropriated to the encouragement of agriculture: and one-half of this sum was employed in supplying the *Estancos* of tobacco with funds to encourage its cultivation; but the effect of this measure does not seem to have been very extensively felt. The minister states, that three millions of dollars are still necessary to enable the government to derive full benefit from this monopoly, and calls upon it to furnish him with that sum to be applied to the purpose.

From this view of the resources from which the government of Colombia endeavours to provide the means of defraying its necessary expenses, and acquitting itself of its obligations to its creditors, it is evident that, if it fails in the attempt, it is not for want of exacting from its population every possible sacrifice, for never was so poor a nation overwhelmed with such a burden of taxation. There is a limit, however, beyond which taxation cannot be carried with effect, and Colombia seems, at least, to have reached, if it has not already passed, that point; for, notwithstanding all her efforts, we are presented, in the exposé of the minister, with the plain and undeniable fact, that every resource has been employed and exhausted, and that the revenue of the country, in the last year, amounted only to 6,196,725 dollars. His estimate of the expenditure for the ensuing year amounted to the alarming sum of 15,487,708 dollars, which, unless the revenue is susceptible of increase, would leave a deficiency greatly exceeding its whole amount: he calculates, indeed, on a considerable improvement in it; but his most sanguine expectations do not allow him to estimate it at a sum much exceeding eleven millions of dollars.

The conclusions which will necessarily be drawn from this official document must be highly inju-

rious to the national credit, and it is of the utmost importance to recover and maintain it by the adoption of speedy and energetic measures to supply or remove this deficiency: to supply it, is perhaps at the present moment impossible; it is therefore necessary, whatever may be the sacrifices required, to make such a reduction in their expenditure as will bring it within their income; and it may then be hoped, that, by the observance of a strict economy for a few years, and the adoption of a wise and liberal system of domestic policy, their increasing resources will not only relieve them from their present embarrassments, but place them in circumstances of respectable prosperity, if not of extraordinary wealth.

In the two acts respecting "the Alienation of Waste Lands" and "the Encouragement to be given to Settlers," the Colombian legislature seems to have duly appreciated the advantages to be derived from the stimulus which would be given to agriculture, by the establishment of a body of settlers who might bring with them, from nations more advanced in knowledge, the modern implements which facilitate its operations, and the improvements which have of late years been made in that great source of national wealth. The easy confidence with which the legislative bodies speak of empowering the executive to procure settlers,

and of the disposal of two or three millions of acres, appears, however, to proceed from very erroneous notions which they have conceived of the inducements which their country holds out to such persons. With respect to the North Americans, it may be confidently asserted, that not a single individual of the class to which allusion is made in the act, would, whilst such extensive wastes are still open to his cultivation at home, forsake his land of liberty, to migrate to any foreign shore. They have, likewise, inaccurate ideas of the state of the labouring classes in Europe, if they imagine that thousands of that description of persons are waiting on its shores, with means to accept their offers, and transport themselves to that distant clime. These delusive expectations are not confined to the government, but have been partaken of by many other persons, both natives and foreigners, some of whom have had opportunities of forming a more correct judgment. From amongst several other instances which I have met with, I select, in proof of this assertion, the following passage from the work of a late traveller in Colombia, who, speaking of the intention of a native of the country to procure from the government the grant of an extensive lake, for the purpose of draining it and bringing the land thus recovered from the waters into cultivation, says, "there is more than

sufficient extent of land to employ a thousand industrious families; and Señor Paris proposes obtaining the population from Scotland, by forming a joint stock company for that purpose, as soon as he can get all the law-papers relating to the grant properly arranged; and few agricultural speculations, I am led to believe, will be found as lucrative."

Not a settler, however, has as yet availed himself of their gracious boon, nor is it likely that, until alterations have taken place both in the constitution and general state of the country, any one ever will. The religious intolerance of the constitution is, as has been already observed, a much more serious obstacle than they seem to imagine. The difference of language, likewise, opposes difficulties not easily surmounted by persons in the lower walks of life, and would occasion considerable inconvenience to the settlers, unless they were assembled in separate colonies, or communities; and they would then be subject to continual vexations from that jealousy and antipathy to foreigners which so generally characterize the descendants of Spaniards. Travellers often speak of the hospitality of these people, and of the kind reception which, in all parts of the country, the foreigner is sure to meet with; and it would be injustice to deny that they are eminently distin-

guished by this virtue; but the hasty conclusions drawn from this slight intercourse with them are much too favourable to their general character. It must be remembered that these good offices are exercised towards a stranger and a traveller, who, by the customs of a country in which there are no public establishments for the entertainment of such persons, is received as a temporary guest, and meets with a welcome which would be refused to a rival, who is come to change, by his superior skill and industry, the habits of the country, and stimulate the native to an unusual exertion, by which alone he can hope to keep himself on an equality with the unwelcome intruder. It would be unreasonable to expect that the peasant of the plains should be exempt from this feeling, when its existence has been on all occasions manifested by the merchants of their commercial cities, and till very lately even by the government itself: in the breast of the native it has been engendered by the selfish policy of his jealous rulers; in the Creole it has been inherited from his Spanish ancestry, who made the exclusion of foreigners a part of the code by which they governed their Indian possessions.

One of the first acts of the existing government was to continue the disabilities under which foreign merchants labour in all Spanish colonies, in being

obliged to consign themselves to a nauve merchant, who receives a commission for passing their goods through the custom-house, and covering with his name their wholesale transactions; they are only acknowledged or allowed to establish themselves as retail dealers and shopkeepers.

In the preamble of a decree issued by the vice-president, under the date of February 27, 1822, it was stated, that foreign and national commerce required fresh regulations to determine the burthens which individuals ought to bear (*los gravamenes que deben sufrir*) who came to establish themselves in the republic; and it was decreed, that no foreigner coming to the ports of Colombia should be allowed to transact his own wholesale business, or clear out vessels through the custom-house, but should be obliged to consign himself agreeably to the former laws.

The foreign merchants of Caraccas, in the year 1824, considering themselves under circumstances of exemption from the operation of this decree, endeavoured to free themselves from the state of dependence in which it placed them, and which, had it been continued, must necessarily have driven them from the country. Upon that occasion, General Escalona, the intendente of the department of Venezuela, published two decrees on the thirteenth and twenty-sixth of July, in that

year, by which the provisions of the former decree were enforced under severe penalties. Previous to that time, however, British consuls had been appointed in the different cities of Colombia, and the representations they made on this subject to the government induced it to rescind these orders; and, during the Congress of that year, a law was passed removing these disabilities, and allowing foreign merchants to transact the whole of their business on the same terms as the natives.

It may be here remarked, that the laws of the government have generally been distinguished by a spirit of liberality; for there are amongst its leading members some men of liberal minds and enlarged views of policy, who possess ability to devise salutary laws, and sufficient influence to carry them through the legislature. They form, however, a very fallible criterion of the general feeling and disposition of the country, and it requires a more intimate acquaintance with these people than can be obtained by a casual visitor, to form a just estimate of either their individual or national character.

The influx of foreigners, who have established themselves in the cities on the coast for the purposes of commerce, has been considerable since the removal of these restrictions, and it is likely to increase; but I do not think that, during the five

years which have elapsed since the establishment of the independence of the republic, twenty persons have settled themselves in the country for the purpose of engaging in agricultural pursuits; the few that have are principally English officers, who have served in the revolutionary war, and have received grants of land in compensation of their services. By their knowledge of the language, and their acquaintance with the manners and habits of the labouring class, joined with their own activity and intelligence, they may perhaps be able to conduct their operations with success; and if gentlemen of this description, and other foreigners, who by a long residence in the country have acquired similar advantages, could have the means of receiving such a number of European labourers as they might themselves be able to protect and employ, the country would derive considerable advantage from the example afforded by their skill and industry, and from the introduction of those improved methods of cultivation which are so much wanted to render the produce of Colombia correspondent with the extreme fertility of her soil. This is, in my opinion, the only method at present practicable of introducing settlers into Colombia with any prospect of benefit to the country; or, what is of still more importance, without involving the emigrant himself in misery

and destruction. Settlers in Colombia would have little to apprehend from the effects of its climate, for, with the exception of some few places, it may generally be considered as salubrious. It is true that a native of Europe could not undertake field-labour without danger in those parts of the country where the tropical heats prevail, that is, in situations which have not at least an elevation of two thousand feet above the level of the sea; but in the maritime departments of Venezuela and Zulia there are many vallies at a greater elevation where he would not experience any inconvenience from the temperature. The situation, however, best adapted to the system of European agriculture, and to the constitution of Europeans, is the high table-land of New Granada, at an elevation of eight thousand feet above the sea, where all the European gramina and fruits are produced in abundance, and attain a high degree of perfection.

At the time when the people of England seemed determined to manage not only their own affairs, but likewise great part of those of the newly emancipated countries of the western world, by means of joint stock companies, an association of this description was formed for the purpose of co-operating with the government of Colombia in the attempt to people its extensive wastes with European settlers. It was denominated the "Colom-

bian Association for Agricultural and other purposes," and established with a capital of 1,300,000*l.* divided into 13,000 shares of 100*l.* each, upon which an instalment of 5*l.* has been paid. This association has acquired possession of different tracts of land in Colombia, exceeding a million of English acres in extent, two-thirds of which were ceded to it gratuitously by the government, and the remainder purchased at the price determined by the law respecting the "alienation of waste lands;" and as, whatever may be the result to the company, Colombia cannot fail to derive very important benefit from this scheme, if it is ever carried into execution, the government have likewise granted several privileges to settlers who may proceed to occupy these lands. They are exempt, during ten years, from military service, except required for local defence; from duties on all clothing imported for their use; from the direct contribution and tithes, on some of the lands for six, on others for ten years; from export duties on the produce raised by them for six years; and they are not to be in any way molested on account of their religious belief.

It is the intention of the company to dispose of its lands in small quantities, either by sale or at an annual rent, to settlers who may be disposed to occupy them; and as an inducement to them to go

out under its auspices, it engages to provide for them, in the most economical manner, a passage to Colombia, where its agents are to receive them on their landing, and conduct them to the place of their location, providing a supply of provisions for their use, and in cases where it may be necessary, making such advances of money as may be deemed prudent. The advantages expected to be derived from this undertaking are, as regards the settler, that he will obtain land of a valuable description, and be furnished with adequate assistance to enable him to bring it into a productive state; as regards the association, that it will receive interest on the advances made to the settlers, and a remuneration for its land, in the shape either of rent or purchase-money, with a prospect of its improvement in value.

For the reasons already given, I fear that this enterprise is not likely to be attended with very great success; I have indeed heard, that the company has attempted to commence an establishment, by sending out some peasants from either Switzerland or Germany, who arrived some months ago on the coast of Colombia, and were placed to climatize on the high lands in the neighbourhood of Santa Martha; but I have not learned whether they have yet proceeded into the interior, or in what spot it is intended to fix them.

This description of emigrants may serve as instruments to ascertain the feasibility of the plan; but I do not think that persons thus collected and sent out can be considered as forming an exception to the remark I have made, that no settlers had availed themselves of the offer made by the Colombian government in its law to invite emigration, for it seems to have contemplated a class of settlers in much more independent circumstances than these persons can be supposed to be.

There can be no dispute respecting the benefit which might be derived by Colombia from the prosecution of this design, nor, if the association provide active and intelligent agents to protect the settlers, and supply their wants till they can bring their lands into cultivation, is anything to be apprehended on their account; but I much doubt whether the company is ever likely to receive any remuneration for its labours, or even to be reimbursed the capital which it is embarking in this pursuit: for I see no reason to suppose that such of these persons as possess capital will rent or buy land from the association, when they can procure a grant from the government of as much as they may require. As for those who, having nothing of their own, are entirely dependent on the funds of the association, when they have taken its lands, and borrowed its money,

they will have enough to do to support themselves; for in a country where land has absolutely no value, except that of the labour or capital bestowed on its cultivation, produce, at least that part of it raised for home-consumption, will necessarily be so cheap, that little will be left to satisfy the demands of a landlord; and the necessity of fixing these establishments in situations where the climate is adapted to the constitution of Europeans will confine their labour almost exclusively to the cultivation of such a description of produce.

The greatest obstacles to the extension of agricultural improvement in Colombia are, the total want of roads, and the tedious navigation of her rivers. These defects render the charge of conveyance so exorbitant, that only the more costly articles of her produce can support the expense of carriage from the interior to the coast. In the first session of the constitutional congress, the government directed its attention to this important subject, and took measures for the adoption, on its majestic streams, of those modern inventions in navigation, which the science of the enlightened age, in which Colombia has had the good fortune to commence her political existence, had already introduced into all the civilised countries of the world. The natural indolence of the natives, and their deficiency in the acquirements necessary to

direct such operations, prevented them from aiding the government in the attainment of this object; it therefore found itself under the necessity of holding out inducements to foreigners to engage in these undertakings, by the offer of exclusive privileges or monopolies for a term of years.

In burthening the nation with this odious system, from which it had been so recently relieved, great caution was requisite, to reconcile the public interests with the anxiety to secure themselves from loss, naturally felt by the persons who ventured on these speculations; and the people had a right to expect that no monopoly should be again established, unless it promised advantages which could not be derived from open competition. The eagerness, however, with which these offers were accepted seems to have prevented the government from acting with the deliberation necessary in so important an affair; for in this first session, they fettered the navigation of their principal rivers by the grant of exclusive privileges, which have put a stop to individual exertion; and, by the imperfect manner in which some of them have hitherto been executed, have proved highly detrimental to the general interests of the country.

One of the first and most important of these grants was made to Mr. Elbers, a native of Germany. By this grant he obtained the exclusive

right of navigating the river Magdalena with steam-boats for twenty years, on the following conditions, viz.—

That he should put such a number of steam-boats on the Magdalena as would be sufficient for the whole of the trade upon that river.

That he should carry the mails gratis, and the troops and government stores, at a price to be determined upon.

That the persons in his employ should be exempt from military service.

That he should improve the communication between the river Magdalena and Carthagena, either by enlarging and deepening the present Dique, or by cutting a new canal, from Barrancas to Mahates, so that the navigation to Carthagena should meet with no impediment at any part of the year.

That he should likewise improve the present navigation between the river Magdalena and Santa Martha, and make a road to Bogotá, from such point on the banks of the river as he should judge most convenient for the erection of ware-houses to contain the goods brought up the river.

And finally, that he should not charge more than twelve dollars a carga (of 250 lbs.) for the carriage of goods up the river; and should undertake to commence his operations within a year.

Three years have now elapsed since this privilege was granted, and during this time, Mr. Elbers has, with considerable labour and expense, cut a road from Guaduas, a point in the old line of communication between Bogotá and Honda, to Peñon de Conejo, situated on the eastern bank of the river, about seven leagues below Honda, and at the distance of thirty leagues from Bogotá, where he proposes to terminate his navigation. Owing, however, to the difficulties which at present oppose the execution of extensive works in Colombia, he has not yet performed those parts of his contract, which relate to the improvement of the communication between the river and the ports of Carthagena and Santa Martha. I have indeed heard, since I left the country, that the local authorities of the province of Carthagena have objected to his interference with the navigation in their district, and are desirous of performing the work themselves. As Mr. Elbers' only object must be to fulfil the terms of his contract, and increase, as much as possible, the carrying trade on the river, I should suppose he would be glad to relinquish the profits arising from this part of the navigation, if he can by that means escape from the onus of so considerable a work. He has at present only one steam-boat on the river, and owing to the difficulties he has

had to overcome, it has hitherto made but few voyages. The important fact has, however, been ascertained, that there is no serious or insurmountable obstacle to the adoption of this mode of navigation on this magnificent river; and it is to be hoped, that the patentee, who is now exerting himself to procure a supply of boats, better suited to the purpose than those which have already been on the river, will be enabled to carry on the enterprise with more activity, and avail himself of the advantages afforded by this valuable contract.

According to the present mode of conveying goods up the river, it requires at least seventy days for the bongos and champans of the country, carrying, upon an average, eighty cargas, and navigated by twenty-four men each, to go from Barrancas to Peñon de Conejo, the place where Mr. Elbers proposes to commence his road; and when the water is at its height in the river, it requires a much longer time. The distance between these two places is about six hundred miles, and the present charge for freight in these boats is sixteen dollars the carga. The average time in which passengers can perform this voyage in small boats is about a month; but, during the greater part of it, they are subjected to such a degree of misery and inconvenience, that it alto-

gether prevents females, or persons in delicate health, from undertaking the journey, unless under circumstances of absolute necessity. If, therefore, the steam-boats could perform the voyage even in a fortnight, which is a much longer time than ought to be requisite for a boat of a force and build adapted to this navigation, the advantages presented by this mode of conveyance would, necessarily, ensure it the whole carrying trade of the river; for it virtually brings the capital, and the abundant produce of the plains in its vicinity, to one-third of its present distance from the coast.

It is computed that the trade of Carthagena affords freight to a champan of eighty cargas from Barrancas every other day throughout the year; this will amount to 14,400 cargas annually; and the trade from Santa Martha cannot be estimated at less than half that quantity, making together, 21,600 cargas, the freight of which will amount to 259,200 dollars; and the freight of produce brought down the river, together with the fare of passengers, must amply provide for all the expenses of the undertaking. This calculation is made upon the present state of the trade; but if once this increased facility of communication was established, there can be little doubt but that both the quantity of merchandise carried up the river,

and that of produce brought down for consumption on the coast, or for exportation, will be greatly increased.

In the same session of congress, a similar privilege for the term of ten years was granted to Colonel James Hamilton, an officer in the Colombian service, for the navigation of the Orinoco and its tributary streams, above the city of Angostura. In the terms of this grant, the same stipulations, with respect to the conveyance of the mails and troops, were made as in that of Mr. Elbers. Colonel Hamilton, likewise, engaged to remove any obstructions in the river which might prevent its navigation by steam-boats; to reduce the charge for freight as low as circumstances would permit, and to place boats in the river within two years after the date of the contract, under the penalty of 20,000 dollars, and the forfeiture of the privilege. The Colonel purchased two boats in England for the purpose of fulfilling this contract; but as they did not leave this country till the spring of 1826, the stipulated time had elapsed, and by a decree of the executive, he has been amerced in the fine, and the privilege declared void.

The profits arising from the introduction of steam-boats into the Orinoco will not be, perhaps, at the present moment, equal to those

derived from the same source in the Magdalena; but the former of these rivers, being navigable as high as Angostura by vessels of considerable burthen, and communicating by means of the numerous streams which fall into it, with the whole country lying at the foot and upon the eastern and southern declivities of the eastern chain of the Andes, holds out much greater prospects of future advantage. The town of Angostura, situated on the south bank of the Orinoco, at the distance of about 240 miles from its mouth, is the capital of the province of Guayana; but although it is the only port through which the inhabitants of a vast region, extending over more than 20,000 square leagues, receive the manufactures of Europe, it does not contain more than six thousand persons. It is not, however, to the scanty population of Guayana, or to the Orinoco alone, that a steam-boat must, in the present state of the country, look for support, but to the traffic of the provinces of Apure and Varinas, brought down the river Apure by means of its several branches which penetrate through the llanos of Varinas and Caracas to the very foot of the eastern Cordillera, and the chain of the coast; and, through a great part of their extent, will admit of this mode of navigation.

The Apure falls into the Orinoco about two

hundred miles above Angostura; and the distance from the confluence of the two rivers to San Fernando de Apure, a considerable town in the province of Apure, and a place of some commerce, is rather more than a hundred miles; from thence the navigation is continued, partly on the Apure and partly on the river Santo Domingo, to Toruño and Varinas, at a distance of two hundred miles farther. The line of navigation of this branch of the commerce of the Orinoco extends, therefore, nearly eight hundred miles from the mouths of the Orinoco to the extremity of the province of Varinas; and when steam-navigation is established upon these rivers, the whole of the valuable produce of this fertile province, and great part of that of the province of Carabobo, will be conveyed through this channel to the markets of Europe. The Orinoco for eight hundred miles from its mouths presents no obstacle to the navigation of a steam-boat, which may not be surmounted without difficulty; but its farther progress is there impeded by the Raudales or cataracts of Atures, which divide the lower from the upper Orinoco. There are rapids at different places in the course of the river, at Muitaco, for instance, about fifty miles above Angostura, and at Cariven and Tabaje near San Borja, a little below the confluence of the river Meta with the Orinoco; but as

in all these places there is sufficient depth of water, obstructions arising merely from the strength of the current may be easily overcome by the methods in common use for that purpose in Europe and the United States.

About sixty miles below the cataracts, the Orinoco receives the Meta, a river which, issuing from the Páramos of Cundinamarca, keeps its course parallel to them for a hundred and fifty miles, to receive their tributary streams; and then, bending to the east, crosses the llanos of Casanare, and completes a course of more than four hundred miles before its confluence with the great river.

At some future period the navigation of the Meta will become an object of great importance to Guayana, and all the other eastern departments of the republic; and may, probably, produce an interesting change in the direction of the commerce of the table-lands of Cundinamarca and Boyacá; for, by the Rio Negro, one of its branches, which, according to Humboldt, is navigable to a point within ten leagues of Bogotá, it will afford a channel for conveying to the torrid regions of the plain and coast, those productions of a more temperate climate for which they are now dependent on foreign nations.

In the session of 1824, an application was made

to Congress, by Messrs. Manhard and Suckley, for the exclusive privilege of navigating the Lagoon of Maracaybo, together with the Zulia and other rivers falling into it, with steam-boats; and the compliance of the legislature having likewise subjected the carrying trade upon these fine waters to this monopoly, the exclusive system was established throughout the greater part of the inland navigation of the republic. When Mr. Manhard obtained this grant, he was already in possession of a steam-boat, which had been originally brought from the United States for the purpose of navigating the Magdalena. He therefore immediately put it on the lagoon, where it has been at work ever since. This position is admirably calculated for steam-navigation; and its establishment cannot fail to prove highly beneficial to the agriculture and commerce of the departments of Zulia and Boyacá, and, if well conducted, extremely lucrative to the parties engaged in this enterprise.

It is obvious, that the extraordinary profits arising from these monopolies must impose a burthen of no small magnitude upon the Colombian nation; and the only justification of the government for adopting such a measure, would be found in the impossibility of introducing these improvements, by the ordinary inducements held out to persons of capital to enter into such specu-

lations, or by the public benefit to be derived from the accomplishment of the conditions with which these grants were accompanied, and the inability of the government, or of the districts particularly interested in their completion, to carry them into execution. With respect to the first of these motives, so far from there having been any difficulty to apprehend in the introduction of this new mode of navigation, it may be safely asserted, that the interference of government has alone prevented the rivers of Colombia from being covered with steam-boats.

Nearly a year previous to the first of these grants being made by the Congress, an individual had succeeded in entering the Magdalena with a boat of this description; he had not, however, provided himself with the necessary information respecting the depth of the river, or the strength of its current; and after having, with much difficulty, succeeded in overcoming the obstacles which opposed his entrance into the river, he found that his boat drew too much water, and that its engine had not sufficient power to stem the rapidity of the stream: he therefore, after having incurred great expense and loss, withdrew it from the Magdalena, and took it down to the river Atrato; but it was found insufficient even for that river, and was brought back to Carthagena, where it

lay for some time, and has, I believe, since been broken up. Shortly after, Mr. Manhard, who has since obtained the monopoly of the Lagoon of Maracaybo, procured a larger boat from the United States, with the intention of navigating the Magdalena; but some circumstance having occurred to prevent its arrival so early as was expected, Mr. Elbers had, in the interim, obtained his grant, and Mr. Manhard could no longer enter that river. Some arrangement, however, took place between these gentlemen, and the boat, soon after its arrival, was sent round to the Magdalena. It succeeded in entering the river without difficulty, although it drew, as well as I can recollect, nearly seven feet water: this is an important circumstance, as, if such a channel can always be found at the mouth of the river, a steam-boat might at once take its freight on board at Santa Martha and Carthagena, and enter the river, without subjecting the trade to the difficulties and delays of the inland navigation. This boat, however, succeeded little better than the first; for its draft of water was found to be too great to allow its passage over the shallows which occur below Mompox, and in other parts of the river: it was therefore withdrawn, and taken to Maracaybo. It is certainly extraordinary that any persons should have engaged in so important a concern as that

of fitting out a steam-boat and sending it across the Caribbean gulf, without having first informed themselves of the different circumstances which affect the navigation of the river on which it was to be employed; but, as these enterprises were undertaken so soon after the establishment of the independence of the republic, and before it was ascertained that such a navigation would succeed upon the Magdalena, they favour the supposition, that the present want of a sufficient number of steam-boats to carry on the trade of the river is owing entirely to the restrictions imposed by the exclusive system.

It is likewise probable, that the inhabitants, both of Carthagena and Santa Martha, would have been eager to improve their respective communications with the Magdalena; for there are, in each of those places, persons of opulence and enterprise, to whom, collectively, the expense of such a work would have been trifling, although to an individual it is a serious consideration; and so nicely balanced are the advantages or rather the inconveniences now presented by these two channels, through which all goods are exported into the interior of that part of the country formerly comprised in the viceroyalty of New Granada, that if either of these places had executed such a work, the commercial existence of the other

would have depended upon its following the example.

Notwithstanding the slow progress which has been hitherto made in the improvement of the inland navigation of Colombia, it is more advanced than that of its roads: indeed the necessity which exists in the mountainous districts of carrying everything on the backs of men or of beasts of burthen, has induced such a habit of employing these modes of conveyance in every situation, that there are no roads for wheel-carriages even in those parts of the country where the configuration of the surface would admit of their formation. The Agricultural Company proposes to devote a part of its capital to remedy the inconvenience under which both commerce and agriculture labour from this defect; and it applied some time since to the government, for the grant of such a privilege as might enable it to undertake the construction of a rail-road, for the distance of fourteen miles, from the port of Laguira to the city of Caraccas, between which places a very considerable traffic is carried on.

About the same time an association was formed at Caraccas, with the title of "La Sociedad Emprendadora," (Society of Enterprise,) for the purpose of undertaking works conducive to the prosperity of the country; and it also made proposals

to the government for the formation of a road for wheel-carriages between those places. It was natural, and even politic in the government to foster and encourage this first display of native enterprise; and it has given the society a privilege for the construction of the road, and empowered it to demand a toll upon it for the period of thirty years. It is to be hoped that this example will be imitated in other parts of the country; for there is nothing which will have a more powerful tendency to ameliorate its general condition than the facility of communication between its different districts which would be afforded by the execution of undertakings of this description.

CHAPTER IV.

Territorial Divisions of Colombia—Population of Provinces —Congress—Army—Navy—Privateers—Cuba—Foreign and Domestic Debt.

For the purpose of facilitating the administration of the laws, and providing for the election of the legislative bodies, the territory of Colombia is divided into twelve departments; each of these is subdivided into provinces, the provinces into cantons, and the cantons into parishes.

The political government of each department is placed in the hands of a magistrate, who has the title of Intendente: he is appointed by the president under the sanction of the Congress, and is invested with the powers formerly enjoyed by the officers who bore the same title under the kings of Spain. His authority extends over the administration of justice, police, finance, and the economical arrangements of war throughout his department: he is bound to make a report of his proceedings to the government, and to execute such of its orders, as may be transmitted to him by the several secretaries of state; and he is likewise the organ through which the decrees of the executive are forwarded to the governors of the

different provinces in the department. He becomes, therefore, judge in every civil and criminal suit within his jurisdiction; nominally, indeed, subject to the law, but with little check over the indulgence of his own passions or caprice—which, owing to the secrecy with which all judicial proceedings are carried on under the Spanish law, are, in a great measure, independent of the salutary controul of public opinion. An appeal lies, however, from his judgment, to the supreme court of the district in which his department is situated; and an assessor, who must be a graduate of law, is appointed to assist him in forming his decisions: in cases where the intendente does not abide by his opinion, the matter is referred to the supreme court.

It is provided by the constitution, that when the trust of intendente is confided to a military person, he shall not have the command of the troops within his department; but during the existing war, and in all cases where the preservation of the public tranquillity or security may render it necessary, the president is authorized to dispense with this provision, and unite the military with the political command of the department. The expense of an appeal to the supreme court is considerable; and even there, not only is everything conducted with the same secrecy, but the laws by which its decisions are guided, are those

which were in force under the arbitrary government of Spain. Therefore, notwithstanding the boasted freedom of the constitution of Columbia, the system of administration to which its several departments are subject, is strongly assimilated to a military despotism; and the existing government exhibits the strange anomaly of twelve despotic states linked together, and governed by a power professing to derive its authority from the collective voice of a people, who are individually subject to all the evils of arbitrary dominion. The intendentes receive a salary of six thousand dollars a year, their assessors two thousand, and the secretaries of the intendencies twelve hundred dollars each.

The government of the provinces is intrusted to a governor, who, in the administration of justice and police, has powers similar to those of the intendente to whom he is immediately subordinate: he also, if not himself a graduate of law, has an assessor, to instruct him in the law of the different cases brought before him. The salary of the governors depends upon the magnitude or importance of their respective provinces; it averages about three thousand dollars, and that of their assessors is about eight hundred dollars a year: those provinces, in which the capital of the department is situated, have no other governor than the intendente. The cantons are

presided over by an officer, entitled the political judge, whose remuneration generally arises from his being intrusted with the collection of some part of the public revenue; and each parish is ruled by two magistrates, called Alcaldes, who are annually appointed by the cabildo of the canton, and whose services are gratuitous.

Several alterations have, since the establishment of the republic, been made, both in the number and the boundaries of the departments; the latest law on the subject, passed during the last session of Congress, has assigned them the following limits. In this enumeration of the departments and provinces, I have given the names of all the capitals of departments, but have omitted those of the capitals of provinces which are identical with the name of the province itself. I have likewise added the estimated number of the inhabitants of each province, as, in the present differences between the central government and some of the departments, it may be interesting to know, not only the parts of the country which disapprove of the present system of government, but also the relative importance which they derive from the amount of their population.

1. Department of Maturin, capital Cumaná; provinces, Cumaná, 70,000; Barcelona, 44,000; Margarita, 15,000, its capital La Asuncion.

2. Department of Venezuela, capital Caraccas; provinces, Caraccas, 200,000; Carabobo, 170,000, its capital Valencia.

3. Department of the Orinoco, capital Varinas; provinces, Varinas, 80,000; Apure, 55,000, its capital Achaguas; Guayana, 45,000, its capital Angostura.

4. Department of Zulia, capital Maracaybo; provinces, Maracaybo, 49,000; Coro, 30,000; Merida, 50,000; Trugillo, 34,000.

5. Department of Boyacá, capital Tunja; provinces, Tunja, 200,000; Socorro, 150,000; Pamplona, 75,000; Casanare, 19,000, its capital Pore.

6. Department of Cundinamarca, capital Bogotá; provinces, Bogotá, 172,000; Antioquia, 104,000, its capital Medellin; Mariquita, 45,000, its capital Honda; Neiva, 50,000.

7. Department of the Magdalena, capital Carthagena; provinces, Carthagena, 130,000; Santa Martha, 62,000; Mompox, 50,000; Rio Hacha, 7,000.

8. Department of Cauca, capital Popayan; provinces, Popayan, 120,000; Chocó, 22,000,

its capital Quibdo, better known by the name of Citará; Pasto, 30,000; Buenaventura, 20,000, its capital Yscuandá.

9. Department of the Isthmus, capital Panamá; provinces, Panamá, 50,000; Veragua, 30,000.

10. Department of Ecuador, capital Quito; provinces, Pichincha, its capital Quito; Imbabura, its capital Ibarra; Chimborazo, its capital Riobamba.

11. Department of Asuay, capital Cuença; provinces, Cuença; Loja; Jaen de Bracamoros y Mainas.

12. Department of Guayaquil, capital Guayaquil; provinces, Guayaquil; Manabí, its capital Puerto Viejo.

The three last-mentioned departments composed the ancient Audiencia of Quito, and their total population, as estimated by Humboldt, amounts to 550,000. I have not seen any data since their late division to determine the population of their several provinces, and as it is a part of the country with which I am little acquainted, I cannot venture to calculate it.

The four first of these departments composed

the former captain-generalship of Caraccas, generally distinguished by the name of Venezuela; the five next, that part of the viceroyalty of New Granada, comprised in the Audiencia of New Granada, and the remainder the Audiencia of Quito: the three great divisions of the present republic contain, therefore,—

Venezuela	842,000
New Granada	1,336,000
Quito	550,000
	2,728,000

Each department sends four senators to the Senate, or upper house of the legislature, and the provinces the number of representatives to the lower house determined by the article of the constitution already cited. The present number of representatives is about one hundred. The Congress is directed by the constitution to hold one session in every year, to commence on the second of January, and continue, if nothing extraordinary occurs, for ninety days; when, however, any particular occurrence may render it necessary, the session may be prolonged for thirty days more. During the session, the senators and representatives receive nine dollars per day for their maintenance, and for each Colombian league (about

three English miles) that the provinces in which they reside are distant from the capital, they are allowed a dollar and a half for travelling expenses. The distance from Bogotá to Angostura is four hundred and twenty leagues, to Cumana four hundred and twenty-five, to Guayaquil three hundred and fifty, and to Carthagena three hundred leagues: these allowances amount, therefore, altogether to a considerable sum.

The president of the republic receives an annual salary of thirty-thousand dollars, and the vice-president, when acting as president during the absence of the latter, or other temporary impediment to his discharge of the office, receives eighteen thousand dollars, and an addition of six thousand when he performs the duties of the executive power.

There are five secretaries of state, each of whom receives a salary of six thousand dollars, and their upper clerks one thousand eight hundred dollars; for the present the offices of secretary of war and of the navy are united in the same person.

The high court of justice, which holds its sittings in the capital, to receive appeals from the inferior tribunals, consists of five members, viz.; three judges and two fiscals, each of whom receives four thousand dollars per annum. The judges of the superior courts established in different parts of the country to obviate the inconveniencies arising from

the expense and delay attending the carrying of appeals from the distant provinces to the capital, receive a salary of three thousand six hundred dollars.

If to these sums are added the salaries of the officers of the customs, and other subordinate agents spread over so vast an extent of territory, it will be found that the expenses of the administration of this republican government are very heavy—owing, however, rather to the necessity of having, under its present form, such a multitude of separate governments, with each its petty administration, than to the exorbitance of the salary which any of its functionaries receive.

Great, however, as these expenses are, the cost of their military and naval establishments constitute still more formidable items of the national expenditure. The Colombian army has hitherto consisted of about thirty-three thousand men, viz. twenty-six thousand infantry, five thousand cavalry, and two thousand artillery; but as one of the latest acts of the congress has decreed that the amount of the military force shall be taken into consideration every session, and regulated by the circumstances of the country, it may be supposed that they do not mean permanently to burden the country with the expense of so large an establishment. By this act a great reduction has also been

made in the number of generals and field-officers, and a regular system has been established for recruiting the army, which will put a stop to the arbitrary and oppressive measures resorted to during the war for filling its ranks; the whole male population between the ages of eighteen and thirty being now made subject to a conscription, by which one-fifth of the standing army will be replaced by ballot every year; the term of service, which may be either personal or by substitute, will be therefore five years.

The nominal pay of the troops, for it was little better, had been during the war very high,—that of a private being ten dollars, and that of a colonel two hundred dollars a month, and the intermediate grades in the same proportion; but during the session of last year, the Congress considerably reduced it. The pay of the private is now six dollars a month, and that of all the other ranks has experienced a proportionate reduction; but even at present, considering the relative prices of labour and provisions, it is much higher than that of the troops of the greater part of the continental powers of Europe. It will be unfortunate for the country, if the continuance of hostilities and the fear of invasion oblige the government to keep up so large a force; for at the present rate of pay, that alone, independent of other expenses,

amounts to a sum little short of three millions of dollars, or nearly half the amount of the revenue of the last year. The estimate of the whole expenses of the military establishment for the present year, amounts to 6,803,296 dollars. During great part of the time that the war was carried on in the territory of the republic, the necessities of the government drove it frequently to the economical expedient of altogether withholding the pay of the troops: this did very well whilst they were on active service, but when they came to lie in garrison, symptoms of discontent were soon manifested, and the mutinies which arose entirely from this cause, in the years 1822 and 1823, at Carthagena and Santa Martha, taught the government how dangerous it would be to trifle in future with a body of men who began to feel their own strength and importance.

The ranks of the army are filled with Indians, negroes, and all intermediate races, some of which produce excellent soldiers, uniting the docility of the Indian with the more hardy constitution, and capability of bearing fatigue, which characterise the negro and the Sambo: they are for the most part in a good state of discipline, and many of the regiments are capable of performing their evolutions with a steadiness and precision which would not disgrace any European regiment,

When the whole of the Colombian army returns from Peru, it will present an efficient force, on which the country may rely with confidence for its defence; and its amount will admit of a number of troops being brought to bear upon every part of the coast, sufficient to repel any force which the present state of Spain will allow her to collect for the purpose of again attempting an invasion. In addition to the regular army, there is a militia, consisting of the whole male population between the ages of sixteen and forty; this force has been organised in some of the maritime towns, and put on a tolerably efficient footing: but in general, little has been done towards its formation, and no great reliance could be placed upon it.

The navy of Colombia is one of her weakest points, notwithstanding the anxiety she has evinced to create a maritime force, and the sums she has lavished in the attempt. At its first formation by Admiral Brion, it consisted of a few brigs and schooners, manned principally by foreigners; but the circumstances of the Colombian government at that time not allowing it to be very punctual in the payment of its seamen—a class of persons who are rather nice upon that point,—they became disgusted with the service; and being for the most part English and Anglo-Americans, they took every opportunity of the arrival of a man of war

of their respective nations in the ports of Colombia, to claim the protection of their national flag, and quit the service of the republic. The ships which the Colombians had purchased were also old and rotten, and proved a source of continual expense.

At length, the loan raised in England by Don Francisco Antonio Zea, placing them in rather better circumstances, they added three or four stout corvettes to their navy, and were emboldened to offer battle to the Spanish squadron, and attempt to prevent it from throwing supplies into Maracaybo, at that time held by Morales. In the action which ensued, they were however overpowered by the superior force of the Spaniards; and notwithstanding the gallant conduct of their commander, Commodore Daniels, a native of the United States, they were completely defeated, and lost two of their corvettes. This disgrace was afterwards in some measure retrieved by the capture of the Spanish corvette, the Ceres, off the island of Cuba, by a small squadron under the command of Colonel Belluche, being the only service, I believe, their navy has ever rendered them on the ocean. The second loan they procured in England, again afforded them the means of increasing their navy, and as they seem to have thought that nothing was wanting but money and ships to render them a naval power, they

immediately laid out a part of it in the purchase, in Europe and North America, of vessels nearly equal in force to a British seventy-four. They have now in their ports two or three of this class of vessels—some corvettes, and several brigs and schooners: but, unfortunately, there are not in the whole republic, sailors enough to man one of their large ships; and English and Anglo-American sailors being tired of the service, it is very probable that their newly purchased navy will lie in port till it falls to pieces, or becomes a prey to the worms.

It would, perhaps, have been better for Colombia, had she followed the example of the United States in this part of their policy. This latter country, although formed by nature for a naval power of the first order, and having at its command every essential for the formation and equipment of a navy, was content, for many years after the declaration of her independence, with two or three frigates, and some smaller vessels, to protect her extensive commerce. Colombia, on the contrary, has determined to have a navy at any cost, although she is obliged to buy the ships and every article necessary for their equipment, even to the provisions for the crew, and she is even then dependent on the caprice of a foreign sailor, to enable her to send any one of her vessels to sea.

In short, Colombia has at present no means within herself of forming a navy capable of opposing any effectual resistance, even to the feeble power of Spain, whose squadrons can at pleasure blockade her ports and keep her coasts in alarm; it would, therefore, be more prudent in her to desist from the vain attempt; for so long as she is under the necessity of purchasing every article requisite, both for the formation and maintenance of a naval force, it will prove not only a hopeless but a ruinous undertaking.

There are, likewise, natural obstacles which threaten to oppose her attainment, even at a future period, of any great degree of naval power; one of the most serious and insurmountable is the total want of a nursery for the formation of sailors; for her fisheries are all carried on in her harbours, or close in to the shore, in the bays on her coast, employing only small canoes; and, notwithstanding her extensive line of coast, she has in the Caribbean sea no coasting trade whatever; this arises partly from there being no mutual demand or interchange of the necessaries of life between her maritime cities; but, principally, from the situation of her coasts within the limits of the trade-winds, in consequence of which, during the greater part of the year, easterly and north easterly gales prevail from Cape Codera to Porto

Bello; and the passage of vessels bound to windward is rendered so difficult and tedious, that a voyage from Carthagena to Europe is attended with less danger, and requires a shorter time than the passage to windward from that city to Porto Cabello or Laguira. The last of these difficulties may, perhaps, be removed by the introduction of steam-boats; but even if they are able to make head against the wind and current on this coast, the nature of the employment on board such vessels is not calculated to make very expert sailors. The seamen Colombia has at present are principally formed in the Island of Margarita and the Lagoon of Maracaybo; but they are not numerous, and the introduction of steam-boats in the navigation of the latter is likely, still farther, to decrease their numbers. The navigation of the coast on the Pacific will not be liable to the same difficulties; but its population is at present very small, and steam-boats will there likewise soon monopolise the whole of the carrying trade.

But even if Colombia could man her ships, she has no natives capable either of commanding or of acting in the capacity of subaltern and petty officers, on board of them, for, Padilla, although inferior to no one in personal bravery, or in the fighting of a gunboat, having had no other nautical education than that acquired during a short

service as boatswain, or boatswain's mate, on board an English man-of-war, cannot be supposed well qualified for the management of one of their large ships; and although their deficiency in commanders is supplied by some foreign officers of ability, who, in addition to those already mentioned, still remain in their service; even their skill is rendered of no avail by the want of subalterns; the greater part of those foreigners who have heretofore filled those situations having retired from the service in disgust.

To remedy these defects in the Colombian navy, a marine school has been established at Carthagena for the purpose of providing a supply of officers; and by a law of the last session of congress, provision has been made for the organisation of a marine militia, to be raised in the maritime departments by a ballot amongst all persons between the ages of sixteen and forty, who follow the occupation of fishing, or are employed either in the merchant service, or in the internal navigation of the country. They will, by the first of these expedients, ensure a future supply of officers, and, by the second, they may immediately fill their ships with men; but the greater part of them will be ill qualified to discharge the duties of a sailor. It is not easy to calculate the actual expense of a navy thus constituted, but the

minister, in his estimate for the present year, thinks it necessary to set apart 4,809,077 dollars for its maintenance.

Notwithstanding the little service rendered during the revolutionary war by the national vessels, the trade of Spain has been greatly harassed by the numerous privateers which have cruised against it, under the Colombian flag. These have, with few exceptions, been fitted out, commanded and manned by foreigners, principally English, French, and Anglo-Americans. By the naval code of Colombia, every vessel sailing under her flag must be commanded by a citizen of the country, and a majority of its crew must likewise be Colombians. These conditions would have entirely prevented the system of privateering, had not the first been dispensed with in the case of a privateer; and the other complied with, by taking on board, in addition to their effective crew, a number of Indians or negroes, who had, perhaps, never before seen the sea. These privateers were so enterprising and successful, that they almost entirely prevented the trade of Spain with the Islands of Cuba and Porto Rico from being carried on in Spanish vessels; and the number of their captures having, consequently, diminished, they have latterly crossed the Atlantic, and displayed the Colombian colours on the very coast of Spain.

It has been frequently asserted in Europe, that the numerous acts of piracy committed in the Caribbean sea have been owing to the encouragement given to privateers by the Colombian government, or the careless manner in which its commissions were granted; this accusation is, however, certainly without foundation, for no nation can take greater precautions than Colombia has done to prevent such an abuse of her flag; her laws for the regulation of privateers being particularly strict and severe; and no vessel of this description being allowed to sail from her ports, without having left some respectable and responsible person as surety for its observance of them, and for its general good conduct during the cruize. It is, indeed, well known in the West Indies, that almost all the vessels by which those enormities have been perpetrated, were fitted out in Cuba; and on the trials of some of the numerous persons who have been taken into Jamaica and executed for this offence, it has been repeatedly proved that even merchants of the Havannah have not scrupled to engage in these disgraceful transactions.

During the early part of the contest between Spain and her colonies, another flag had appeared in those seas, which served as a pretext to cover the depredations carried on against the commerce

of that power. When the Captain-generalship of Buenos Ayres raised the standard of revolt against the dominion of the mother-country, the north-eastern provinces, which had formed part of that government, separated from the new republic, and establishing themselves as an independent state, assumed the name of the Banda Oriental. Being situated at some distance from the mouth of the river Plata, the city of Buenos Ayres, which stands below them on that river, cut off their intercourse with the coast, till Artegas, their commander, contrived to seize upon Monte Video, and opened a communication with the ocean. The first use he made of this advantage was to issue numerous commissions to privateers to cruize against the Spaniards; and one of these was obtained by Aury, a Frenchman, who, finding the coast possessed by the Banda Oriental little adapted to his purpose, transferred his station to the Caribbean sea. He there took possession of the island of Old Providence, and establishing an independent jurisdiction, collected a squadron of ten or twelve brigs and schooners, and carried on very successful hostilities against the trade of Cuba and Porto Rico, and even attacked the harbours, and made descents on the Mexican coast. This abuse of the respect paid by the maritime powers to the flags of the nascent re-

publics was carried on for some time with impunity; it, however, at length excited the attention of the British commander on the Jamaica station, and measures were about to be adopted for the suppression of this establishment, when Aury received an injury by a fall from his horse, which occasioned his death, and the person who succeeded him in the command offered the services of himself and his vessels to the republic of Colombia. These offers were accepted by that government, and the island of Old Providence, together with San Andres, and the two Corn islands, which had been formerly subject to the vice-royalty of New Granada, were taken possession of by the republic, and now form one of the cantons of the province of Carthagena.

Notwithstanding the inefficient state of the Colombian navy, and the absolute nullity of that of Mexico, these two powers, elate with the success which has attended their efforts within their own territories, and desirous of avenging themselves upon Spain for the obstinacy with which she has refused to acknowledge their independence, meditated, some months ago, an attack upon the island of Cuba; the embarrassed state, however, of their finances, or, perhaps, more deliberate reflection upon the consequences of such an attempt, put a stop to the execution of this project. But

the apprehensions of losing this valuable remnant of her American possessions, at length roused the Spanish court from its lethargy, and stimulated it to such energetic measures of defence, that, seconded as they were by the fears of the European and Creole inhabitants of the island, to whose imagination the threatened invasion presented all the horrors of a servile war, it has been enabled to resume offensive operations, and adopt measures of retaliation, which have threatened unpleasant results both to Mexico and Colombia.

It has often excited surprise, that amidst the wreck of the Spanish power in its transatlantic dominions, Cuba should have escaped the revolutionary contagion, and remained firm in its allegiance to Spain. This loyalty has acquired for the capital of the island the honorary title of "Siempre fiel," (ever faithful,) but it proceeds rather from a dread of the excitement which any internal convulsion might produce amongst its black population, and from the conviction of its inability to maintain its independence, than from any attachment to the despotic government of Spain; for there is no city in the countries which have shaken off the Spanish yoke, where liberal and national topics have been more freely discussed, or have awakened a more lively interest than in the Havana. Humboldt, in his enume-

ration of the population of the different West Indian islands, states that of Cuba to have consisted, in 1823, of 326,000 whites, 120,000 free people of colour, and 256,000 slaves. Till the end of the last century, the number of the white population was in a much greater ratio to that of the blacks than it is at present: for during the last twenty-five years, the increased cultivation of the island has augmented the demand for slaves; and for the three or four years previous to the abolition of the slave-trade, which, by a treaty with Great Britain, this island was allowed to carry on till 1819, an extraordinary activity was displayed in the importation of those unfortunate beings.

I was, myself, in the Havana in that year, and the number of slaves imported was calculated at little less than 30,000. Cuba, however, has still the advantage of possessing a greater proportion of white population than any other island in the West Indies belonging to European powers, with the exception of Porto Rico; the average of the English islands giving a majority of slaves in the ratio of five to one.

The number of regular troops which Spain considers necessary to garrison the forts and preserve tranquillity in the island, is about five thousand men; there is likewise a militia of thirty thousand white persons, consisting principally of cavalry,

but they are in a state of very little discipline, and, from the nature of the country, incapable of opposing any effectual resistance to an invading army. Notwithstanding the amount of this force, and the numerous blood-hounds which are kept as its auxiliaries on the principal estates in the island, there are frequent insurrections of the negroes, who are not generally in a state of much subordination; a rising of the slaves is therefore generally dreaded as the immediate consequence of an invasion by a force consisting of such materials as those which compose the Colombian army, and it would be inevitably attended with the massacre of every white person who had not the means of escaping to the fortresses. It would be a calamity very extensively felt if this fine island were to meet with such a fate; and it would likewise be a subject of regret, that these young republics should draw down upon themselves the resentment and indignation of the civilised world by this wanton act of hostility, for such it must be considered, as they could never hope to turn to their own advantage the storm which their mere presence would raise, or the confusion and horrors which would be its unavoidable results. The strength of the Havana would indeed enable it to mock the attempts either of such a foreign enemy, or of the revolted population of the island; but the destruc-

tion and desolation of the country would leave it an insulated spot, useless to Spain, and an object of jealousy and contention to all the maritime powers of the world.

The consequences of such a revolution in Cuba would be particularly felt by Great Britain and the United States, on account both of its importance as a military station, commanding the commerce of a considerable part of the American continent, and likewise from its proximity to their own colonies or states in which the condition of the population gives reason for apprehensions of a similar catastrophe. The anxiety, long felt on this subject by the government of the United States, has manifested itself on several occasions, particularly by the extraordinary negotiation in which, unsolicited by either of the parties interested, she has been lately engaged with Russia, to induce that power to mediate between Spain and her late colonies, apparently for no other purpose than that of obtaining her guarantee of the tranquil possession of Cuba and Porto Rico to the crown of Spain. There can be little doubt also, that the strong opposition made in the Anglo-American legislature to the proposal of sending representatives to the congress at Panamá was overcome by these apprehensions respecting Cuba: for if it had not had some such object of importance in view it would

have scorned to exhibit itself in such an empty pageant.

The strong language used in the debates of both houses of congress on this occasion has in a great measure disclosed the views of the government of the United States, and given publicity to the sentiments prevalent on this question throughout the Southern States of the North American Union. The following extract from the speech delivered in the senate by one of the members for Georgia, may be taken as a specimen of this general feeling. "Cuba and Porto Rico," said Mr. Berrien, "must remain as they are; to Europe the president has said, 'we cannot allow a transfer of Cuba to any European power.' We must hold a language equally decisive to the Spanish American States. We cannot allow their principle of universal emancipation to be called into action, in a situation where, from its neighbourhood, its contagion would be dangerous to our quiet and safety." If sentiments such as these influenced the decision of the Anglo-American congress, we may hazard the supposition, that their deputies are instructed to signify to the new states the wishes or perhaps the orders of their government not to interfere with Cuba.

The importance of this island * which, indepen-

* The following observations on the importance of the

dent of the apprehensions excited by the numbers and condition of its black population, renders it an object of such solicitude, arises from the strength and security of the harbour of the Havana, combined with the peculiar advantages of its situation, and the circumstances which attend the navigation of the sea, which is engulphed between the shores of the North and South American continents. Throughout the tropical regions, the prevalent direction of the wind is the same with that of the sun in its diurnal course; and blowing with regularity from east to west, it forces the waters of the Atlantic into the southern side of the Caribbean Gulph, through which they are carried westward, till meeting opposition to their farther progress in that direction from the barrier of the Isthmus of Darien, they are returned to the ocean by a contrary stream through the Gulph of Florida. Vessels, therefore, from the coasts of South America have, in shaping their course to the eastward, to contend at all times against the wind, and during the greater part of the year against the united force of wind and current; and, if too far to the westward to make either the windward or Mona

Havana appeared in a little pamphlet, which the author of these pages published in the year 1820, in Kingston, Jamaica; but as, in all probability, it was never seen out of the island, he makes no apology for now repeating them.

passages, situated at the western and eastern extremities of the island of Santo Domingo, they are under the necessity of doubling Cape Antonio, the western point of Cuba, and proceeding to Europe or then orthern parts of America by the Gulph Stream. The fortress of the Havana, situated in north latitude 23° 8′, nearly under the tropic of Cancer, is directly opposite to Cape Sable, the most southerly point of the Floridas, and at not more than the distance of one hundred miles from it; it has therefore an absolute controul over the trade between Europe and all the western ports of Colombia, the Isthmus of Darien, the Mosquito shore, Honduras, Campeachy, Mexico, the vast countries whose riches are poured down the majestic stream of the Mississippi, and western Florida. The produce of Jamaica would likewise in time of war find a difficulty in reaching Europe, if the Havana were in possession of a hostile power: for even in time of peace more than half the homeward-bound ships from that island prefer, when not under apprehension of pirates, the passage round the western cape of Cuba; and during war, when they are collected in large convoys, the windward passages are scarcely ever attempted.

Although the extent of the island of Cuba, nearly equal to that of Great Britain, and its fertility, would necessarily occasion an influx of wealth to

its capital, there are adventitious circumstances which have contributed to the aggrandisement of the Havana; for it was always considered by the Spaniards as the port of Mexico, which has no harbour on its eastern coast where a vessel can lie in security; and it was likewise the rendezvous of the Galeons from Porto Bello, and the Flota from Vera Cruz, which for so many years conveyed to Europe the riches of the western world. The wealth thus collected in this city was an object of attraction to the piratical adventurers, who, under the name of Buccaneers, formerly infested these seas, and it suffered repeatedly from their predatory attacks. The attention of Spain was therefore early directed to the improvement of its natural means of defence, and considerable works were erected for the purpose of placing it in a state of greater security; they opposed, however, an ineffectual resistance to the attack of the British in 1762.

It is extraordinary that England should ever have relinquished so valuable a conquest, but probably her relative strength at that time did not enable her to withstand the anxious desire of Spain to recover this important place, and at the ensuing peace it was exchanged for the Floridas. The Spaniards always considered the Havana as the key of their American dominions. As soon, there-

fore, as they had regained possession of it, they expended immense sums in the erection of additional works, which are now so complete, that if properly manned, aided as they are by the deleterious effects of a tropical climate, they may be deemed impregnable. It is not more than thirty years since the produce of Cuba was less than that of the small island of Antigua; but its exportation of coffee is now superior in quantity to that of Jamaica, and it is rapidly approaching to an equality with that island in the production of sugar; its revenue has, in consequence of this increased cultivation, become so considerable, that during the revolutionary war in Colombia, it in a great measure supported the Spanish army in that country, besides transmitting a considerable sum annually to Spain; whereas it formerly received from Mexico no less a sum than 1,826,000 dollars for the support of its government, and the maintenance of its fortifications.

The harbour of the Havana is one of the most secure and commodious in the world, being formed by an oblong lake of about three miles in length, and one and a half in breadth, surrounded by eminences which shelter it from every wind, and communicating with the sea by a channel of about half a mile in length, and from two to three hundred yards in width, upon the western bank of

which the city is built. This channel is admirably defended: on its eastern bank, at the entrance from the sea, stands the Moro—a strong castle, mounting one hundred guns, which, at the time the English took the Havana, was its only defence on this side: but when the Spaniards became again masters of the place, they constructed a fortress of extraordinary strength, extending from the Moro along the whole length of the eastern bank of the channel. This work is cut out of the solid rock, and from the mode of its construction has received the name of the Cavaños; it mounts three hundred and fifty guns. There are likewise batteries at the foot of the Moro, and under the Cavaños, on a level with the water, and fitted up to throw red-hot shot. On the opposite bank also there are four batteries, mounting from twelve to twenty guns each, forming altogether a defence which renders the entrance of a hostile force almost impossible. It is equally strong towards the land; for, in addition to the wall which runs across the neck of land upon which the city is built, the Spaniards have, since the attack of the English, built upon an eminence, at the distance of about two miles from the city, a fort, named Fort Principe, perhaps the finest and most difficult of approach of any in the world. This beautiful work mounts one hundred and sixty guns, and

commands, on one side, the whole of the beach near the city, and on the other, crossing its fire with that of fort Ataro, which stands at the western extremity of the harbour, completely prevents the approach of a hostile force from the country.

The strength of this position, and the ascendancy which its possession would give to any maritime power over so great a portion of the commerce of the western hemisphere, necessarily induce both England and the United States to watch over it with a jealous eye. It seems, however, to be an object of much greater importance to Great Britain than to the United States, for the latter power has, by the acquisition of the Floridas, already obtained a position on the great channel of western traffic, which, in the event of war, would afford means of intercepting and annoying British commerce, only to be counteracted by the occupation of Cuba by England; and if, in addition to this advantage already secured, the United States should, either by conquest, or by taking Cuba into their confederation, gain possession of the Havana, the intercourse of Europe with the greater part of the western world would be dependent on the pleasure of that government, and her commerce might be considered as virtually excluded from the Caribbean sea.

To return, however, from this digression, to the proposed invasion of Cuba by the Colombians and Mexicans, it may be remarked, that, even if the conquest or revolution of this island could be effected, without producing the consequences so much apprehended, it would hold out little prospect of advantage to Colombia, for, independent of the general impolicy of any attempt to enlarge her present territory, there is no reciprocity of interest to induce either of those countries to wish for a closer connection. With regard to Mexico, the case is somewhat different: for the union of Cuba to that republic would afford her the important advantage of a secure harbour, from whence her coast might be supplied with the manufactures of Europe, and at the same time furnish her with a military position to cover her eastern frontier, and enable her to form a navy for the protection of her coasts and commerce. Cuba would, however, by no means derive equal advantage from such an union; it is not therefore likely, that she will sacrifice her own interests to he accommodation of Mexico.

The Spaniards are said to have at present in Cuba a military force of nearly ten thousand men, and their squadron lately consisted of a man of war, and five or six large frigates, the command of which was intrusted to Laborde, an able

and indefatigable officer, who, for the last eight years, has been actively employed in hostilities against Colombia, and is intimately acquainted with every part of her coasts. By embarking a body of troops on board of such a squadron, and making demonstrations of invasion on different parts of the Colombian coast, he might keep it in continual alarm, and produce, at least, the effect of obliging the government of that country to keep up a military force, ill suited to the present state of its finance. I think this, however, will be the extent of the mischief he can do to Colombia; for if care is taken to prevent him from gaining possession of any of the fortresses on the coast, by such circumstances as gave Maracaybo to Morales, in 1822, the whole force which Spain now has in Cuba would be unable to maintain itself in the field against the Colombian army. The Spaniards can likewise do little injury to the trade of Colombia; for she has very few vessels under her flag, and foreign vessels cannot be prevented from entering her ports, except in the case of an actual blockade, which, in consequence of the number of her ports, and the tempestuous weather on her coasts, has been always a difficult and, generally, a nugatory attempt, having ended, in most instances, in the destruction of the vessels which have hitherto undertaken it.

Colombia has, in my opinion, a great advantage over Mexico in their respective means of opposing an invasion; for the protracted contest she has for fifteen years maintained against the mother-country, during the greater part of which time an active war has been carried on in her territory, has given discipline and confidence to her troops, and military habits to her population, which the Mexicans have not yet had an opportunity of acquiring: the alternation of success and defeat during the period of so long a war has likewise afforded the Colombians an opportunity of extirpating the greater part of the European Spaniards and other adherents of the cause of Spain, whilst in Mexico there still remains a strong party attached to the former government.

In this and the preceding chapter, I have presented a general view, both of the expenditure of Colombia, and of the means by which she endeavours to raise a revenue to support it. But to enable persons interested in the financial prosperity of that country to form a correct opinion of its present condition, it will be necessary, likewise, to offer some remarks on the expedients by which the government of Colombia provided for its expenditure during the infancy of its establishments, and the burthens they have entailed upon her.

In the early part of the revolutionary war, the patriots were but ill supplied with money to purchase the articles indispensably necessary for the support of the cause in which they were embarked. A state of warfare in the warm climates of South America is not, indeed, so costly as in Europe, for much lighter and less expensive clothing is sufficient for the soldier; and the cattle which wander in the plains and woods furnish him with cheap and ready means of support; money is, however, still necessary for the purpose of procuring arms and ammunition; or, in its default, persons must be found willing to hazard their property on the risk of eventual payment, and furnish the requisite supplies in reliance on the honour of the parties, if their enterprise is attended with success. The South Americans fortunately found in England and the West Indies many persons of this description, who embarked in these speculations, and provided them with the means of maintaining the contest in which they were engaged.

As might be expected, supplies furnished on so precarious a security were charged at a high price, as an indemnification for the risk incurred, and the debentures given in payment, or rather in acknowledgment of the debt, bore, likewise, a high rate of interest. As soon, therefore, as the

Colombians had succeeded in establishing their independence, and began to exercise the prerogatives of sovereignty, they became necessarily anxious to relieve themselves from the burthens imposed by the insecurity of their previous situation; and, following the example of older governments, attempted to raise in England, on the credit of their resources, a sufficient sum to discharge the most urgent of their debts, and prepare a fund for further exigencies, till the arrangement of their affairs should enable them to provide a revenue adequate to their expenditure. Previous, therefore, to the installation of the constitutional congress, Bolivar, at that time acknowledged as the head of the government, sent Señor Zea to England, and invested him with full powers to act, according to his judgment, for the service of the republic; and, if possible, to procure a loan to the amount of five millions sterling, to be applied to the purposes above-specified.

The successes of the patriots had inspired in England such confidence in their cause, that Zea would have found no difficulty in procuring the whole of that sum, but he limited the amount of the loan which he contracted for to two millions sterling, with part of which he discharged some of the debts of Colombia; and with the remainder procured such supplies as the country stood in

need of. This loan was contracted for by the house of Messrs. Herring, Graham, and Powles; the Colombian government receiving eighty pounds for every hundred, and engaging to pay an interest of six per cent. in half-yearly dividends, payable the 1st of May and November in each year, and to appropriate one per cent. to the formation of a fund for the liquidation of the debt.

It was generally considered by persons in London conversant with such subjects, that the contract made by Zea was, under the circumstances in which Colombia was then placed, and in comparison with the terms of loans raised by other powers, extremely favourable to the republic. In the interval, however, which had elapsed between Zea's appointment and the negotiation of the loan, the constitutional government had been established; which, on receiving intelligence of the steps he had taken, and the manner in which he had appropriated the money, issued a decree declaring that the powers granted to Zea by the president did not extend to financial arrangements, and refusing to acknowledge the loan he had contracted, as a debt of the nation.

These measures excited the indignation of every person engaged in the loan, as the documents with which Zea was provided, signed by the president, and countersigned by the secretary for

foreign affairs, contained the clearest evidence of the validity of his appointment; and his continuance in England, as accredited agent of the new government, seemed to imply their tacit acknowledgment of all the powers with which he had been originally invested. Although the government of Colombia was not amenable to the laws of England, the opinions of some of the most eminent counsel in London were taken on the subject; and they unanimously agreed that the government was bound to fulfil the engagements entered into by Zea. Strong representations were made by the parties interested to the government of Colombia, but, unfortunately, the circumstances of this affair were never thoroughly explained, in consequence of the death of Zea, which event took place before he had had an opportunity of vindicating his character from the aspersions cast upon it by the decrees of the Colombian executive.

The successor to Zea, as agent to the republic in England, was Señor Revenga, a gentleman well qualified, both by his natural talent, and a knowledge of the world, acquired by a residence in Europe and the United States, to promote the interests of his country in Europe. As, however, he was not authorised to acknowledge the loan contracted for by his predecessor, he was not very

favourably received in England; and some other unpleasant circumstances, in which he was involved by measures taken against him by a creditor of the republic, probably rendered his residence in London so little agreeable, that he in a short time solicited his recal.

Señor Hurtado, the present Colombian minister in England, was appointed to succeed him; and about the same time, the government, finding itself in want of more money, sent to England Señores Montoya and Arrublas, two opulent merchants of Colombia, who had become considerable creditors of the country by the advance of money during its necessities, as its commissioners, to endeavour to raise a further loan. It was well known that any such attempt would be fruitless, unless the former loan was acknowledged by the government; and Señor Hurtado was empowered to take this necessary step. The Colombian commissioners arrived in London early in 1824; and immediately made proposals to the capitalists of the city to carry into effect the object of their mission. Money was at that time abundant in England, and public confidence strong in the resources and stability of the new American governments; there was, therefore, considerable competition for this contract. The commissioners, however, selected the offer of Messrs. B. A.

Goldschmidt and Co., although their bidding was not the highest, nor were the terms upon which they offered to transact the agency of the government so favourable as those of some of the other parties who made proposals for the loan.

By the terms of this contract, the government received eighty-five per cent. upon 4,750,000*l.* sterling, the amount of this loan, engaging to pay an interest of six per cent. upon it, payable half yearly, on the 15th of January and of July in each year, and to appropriate an annual fund to provide for its redemption in thirty years. It had been usual, in similar loans, for the contractors to retain a sufficient sum to pay the dividends of the first two years; in the present instance, an amount equal to the dividends for that term was withheld, but it was stipulated by the contractors, that the interest should commence from the 15th of January, 1824, although the loan itself was not contracted for till the month of May subsequent to that date; and the first instalment upon it was not paid till June of that year, nor the last till the month of August, 1825. A great part of the money thus withheld became therefore rather a bonus to the contractors than a security to the holders of stock for the payment of their dividends.

By the eighth article of the contract, the com-

missioners appointed the house of Messrs. B. A. Goldschmidt and Co. agents for the republic in all its mercantile transactions in England. By the ninth, they were appointed special agents and commissioners for the payment of the interest of the loan and management of the sinking fund, allowing them a commission of two per cent. and all their expenses. And by the tenth, the republic engaged to negotiate no other loan in Europe or elsewhere, for the term of two years, without the approbation of Messrs. B. A. Goldschmidt and Co.; and if any loan was contracted in England within or after the said two years, that house was to have the preference in taking it.

When the terms of this contract were known in Colombia, they excited such dissatisfaction, that it was even made a question whether or not the loan should be acknowledged. This displeasure was still further increased by a protest forwarded to Bogotá by some gentlemen who had formed a list, and made proposals for the loan, on terms which they stated to have been more advantageous for the republic than those on which it was concluded, having offered to give eighty-eight per cent., and on conditions more favourable with respect to the payment of the first interest. They complained, likewise, that, instead of keeping the bidding open till five o'clock, as

had been proposed by the commissioners, the loan had actually been promised to Messrs. B. A. Goldschmidt and Co. before their offer was given in. A special commission of finance was appointed in Bogotá, to inquire into these circumstances, and report to the Congress the result of their investigation. After some deliberation, it came to the decision, that the good faith and honour of the republic would be compromised by any attempt to invalidate the contract entered into by its commissioners, as, however disadvantageous to the republic the terms might be which they had accepted, they had not deviated in any material point from the tenor of their instructions; it therefore proposed the following resolutions for the adoption of Congress:—

1. That the executive had discharged the duty imposed on it by a decree of 30th June, 1823, empowering it to raise a loan of thirty millions of dollars.

2. That the loan contracted by the commissioners with the house of Messrs. B. A. Goldschmidt and Co. should be ratified.

3. That the eighth and tenth articles should be rejected, as the commissioners had no power to grant such conditions.

4. That the commission of two per cent., and the payment of all expenses being excessive and

unusual, some arrangement should be made with Messrs. Goldschmidt and Co. on that head.

5. That the executive should make its agents (as well as Señor Hurtado, if he had any share in the transaction) responsible for the notorious mismanagement evident in the negotiation of the loan, and proceed against them for the recovery of the loss sustained by the republic, in the anticipation of the interest and other conditions of the loan.

The commissioners estimated the loss sustained by the republic at 1,276,660 dollars.

A reply was made by Señores Montoya and Arrublas to the report of the commissioners, and on the 1st of May, 1825, the government put an end to the dispute, by ratifying the loan and introducing a modification of the eighth and tenth articles, by which Messrs. B. A. Goldschmidt and Co. were appointed agents for the payment of the loan only; and it bound itself to give that house a preference in case any new loan should be contracted in England within two years.

These difficulties having been thus accommodated, things went on very smoothly, so long as any of the money reserved for the payment of the dividends remained in hand; but the term of two years, calculated according to the conditions of the contract, having expired in January, 1826;

the dividend then due was paid with the last of that money, and the government was left to its own resources to make future provision for the maintenance of its credit.

It unfortunately happened that the commercial part of the community in England were involved in considerable embarrassment at the time that the first dividends, to be provided for by a remittance from Colombia, became due; and, in consequence either of the failure of the agents of the republic, or the disappointment its government experienced in not receiving a sum of money due to it from the republic of Peru, it had no funds in England to meet the periodical demand of the bondholders. It is difficult to determine how far the first of the above-mentioned causes operated to prevent the Colombian government from fulfilling its pecuniary engagements; for, in the few direct communications which were made to the public by its minister in England, that circumstance was so slightly hinted at, that it was not generally imagined that the government had such a demand upon its agents as would influence the payment of the dividend upon its debt.

The first serious alarm, however, felt by the public on the subject of Colombian stock, was certainly excited by their failure which happened in the beginning of February; on the twenty-eighth

of that month, Señor Hurtado published a letter in the public papers with the object of quieting the apprehensions of the creditors of the republic, in which he stated, "that he had arranged with the house of Messrs. Barclay, Herring, Richardson, and Co. for the payment of the dividend on the loan of 1822, due the 1st of May; and that money for the payment of the dividend on the loan of 1824, due the 15th of July, having been ordered by the Colombian government to be deposited for shipment at Carthagena, he had some time past despatched a vessel for the purpose of bringing it to England."

The dividend in May was paid in due course; but on the 15th of July there was no intelligence of the money mentioned in the above letter, nor any communication from Señor Hurtado on the subject; the bondholders became, therefore, rather loud in their expressions of discontent, as they at least expected some explanation of the circumstances which had led to their disappointment. Two or three days afterwards, however, the Colombian minister again addressed the public, stating, that, "having received several applications from persons describing themselves as holders of Colombian bonds, soliciting information on the subject of the dividend, he thought proper to inform them, that the Colombian government having

made arrangements for setting aside a certain portion of its revenue for the payment of the dividends upon its loans, he had despatched a vessel to bring the sum necessary for that purpose: in consequence, however, of the government of Peru, which had become debtor to Colombia in a large amount, having authorised the raising of a loan in England, the Colombian government had sent an order on the Peruvian agents in London for the amount, but that, owing to their inability to raise such loan, it had not been honoured; that the Colombian government had not been informed of this circumstance, or of the failure of Messrs. Goldschmidt and Co. in time to remit the requisite funds, but that he hoped to receive despatches shortly which would enable him to make them a communication in every respect satisfactory."

The portion of revenue here alluded to as being set aside for the payment of the interest of the debt was one-fourth of the produce of the customs, which, by an act of congress, passed in the session of 1824, had been appropriated to that purpose, and was ordered to be sent from the different ports on the Atlantic coast to Carthagena, and from those on the Pacific to Panamá, where it was to await the orders of the government for its transmission to Europe. The money mentioned by the minister in his first communication as having been

deposited for shipment at Carthagena, by order of the government, was probably this same appropriated portion of the revenue; but as no tidings were received of it, it appears to have been applied to other uses.

As soon as the embarrassment in the state of Colombian affairs in England was known in Bogotá, an extraordinary meeting of the congress was convoked for the purpose of providing for the emergency; and it is worthy of observation, that in the decree issued on that occasion, no notice whatever is taken of the failure of the agents of the republic, the sole reason assigned for the necessity of such a measure being, "that intelligence had just been received, that Peru was not able to procure a further loan in England, and as Colombia had relied on that resource to pay the interest upon her debt, it was necessary immediately to provide means of payment, lest the republic should suffer in its credit." If this, indeed, was its only reliance, the government may be justly blamed for trusting so important a concern as the preservation of its credit in Europe to so uncertain a contingency; it must, however, be acknowledged, that as soon as it had ascertained that this resource had failed, it adopted every means in its power to remedy the disaster.

The first step taken to secure the interest of

the creditors, and to restore the credit of the republic, was to appropriate a certain portion of its revenue to the payment of the interest both of the foreign and domestic debt. With this object, a law was passed to the following purport;

Colombia acknowledges as national debts:—

1. 2,000,000*l.* sterling, contracted by Señor Zea, in Paris, in March 1822.
2. 4,750,000*l.* sterling, contracted by Señores Montoya and Arrublas, April 1824.
3. The sum explained and liquidated by the commission established in Bogotá, amounting to 1,181,470 dollars.
4. The sum of 814,710 dollars, which was contracted, and is not paid, by a loan decreed by a law of July 1823, for military supplies.
5. The sum which remains of 5,458,609 dollars for military property which was decreed to the servants of the republic by a law of September 1821.
6. The sums due to the military and civil servants of the republic, for payments withheld from them according to different laws passed to that effect.

It is declared that the foreign debt mentioned

in articles 1. and 2. has yielded, and shall yield, six per cent. as stipulated by the contracts.

That debts in 3. and 4. shall yield 5 per cent.

That debts in 5. and 6. shall bear an interest of 3 per cent.

For the payment and gradual redemption of the foreign debt, the following resources are especially appropriated.

1. All the clear produce of the revenue of tobacco.
2. One eighth of the produce of the customs.
3. The whole produce of the uncultivated lands which may be sold or let.
4. The whole produce arising from the farming and sale of the mines of every kind of metal belonging to the republic.
5. The funds of such ecclesiastical censos as may at any time be redeemed in cash.

To the payment of the domestic debt are appropriated,

1. The revenue arising from mortgages and sequestration of confiscated property.
2. The revenue arising from the property of majorats.
3. The revenue of the lands and other property which are, by law of the 1st of July 1824, included in national property.

4. The revenue of property and temporalities which have not been alienated or adjudicated.
5. The revenue of property belonging to the extinct Inquisition, which may not yet be transferred or adjudicated.
6. The revenues arising from mortgages or real property condemned, and which may be realised in money.
7. The clear produce of the stamp duty.
8. The produce arising from the notification of mortgages, and of the registration of deeds and titles.
9. The produce of duties on sales by auction.
10. The one-ninth of the tithes which were to be consolidated.
11. 10 per cent. on all municipal revenues.
12. That part of the tithes allotted to dignitaries, canonships, prebendaries, and deaneries which may be vacant, or may become vacant, in the different cathedrals of Colombia.
13. The fines liable to be paid for infraction of conditions, or non-fulfilment of contracts under which exclusive privileges have been granted.
14. The revenues and property formerly appropriated to the college of nobles at Madrid.

For the redemption of the capital of the domes-

tic debt, is exclusively appropriated the produce of the sale of all landed property mentioned in Nos. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. of the sources of revenue applied to the payment of its interest.

To the funds for the interest and extinction of the foreign debt, accrue all the surpluses appropriated to the payment of the interest of the domestic debt, the same being satisfied.

This appropriation does not do away the obligation by which all other revenues of the republic are bound to make good any deficiency which may remain after their application, as the whole revenue is declared to be pledged for that purpose.

As this appropriation of revenue to the payment of the interest on the debt was rather a prospective measure, than a provision for the existing emergency, the government, in order to provide for the dividend in arrear, and those immediately succeeding, decreed that all arrears and balances due to the state should be applied to this purpose; and that every exertion should be made to enforce their payment. The legislature, likewise, empowered the executive to call upon the people for an advance of money, in anticipation of the *contribucion directa*, to be repaid them by a deduction of the amount advanced in the four ensuing half-yearly payments of that tax.

With respect to the adequacy of the means destined to provide for the future payment of the dividends, it may be remarked, that the third branch of revenue specified as appropriated to that purpose, viz. the produce of uncultivated lands, amounted, in the last year, to no more than 4,477 dollars, and there is little prospect of any rapid increase in its amount. The fourth, the rent and sale of mines, amounted last year only to 679 dollars: if, however, the mining companies continue their operations, and should be successful, the receipts from this source may improve, as the rents of the mines belonging to the government are paid by a per centage on their produce; but it would not be very prudent to place much dependence on them. The fifth article seems, at present, to have no determinate value. From a reference to the statements already given of the value of the different branches of the revenue, it will be seen, that the parts of it appropriated by the first and second articles, viz. the income of the monopoly on tobacco, and an eighth of the duties on imports and exports, amounted in the last year to 1,153,559 dollars, and that the minister of finance, in his estimate for the present year, calculated, that by the improvements he proposed; they might be increased 1,892,656 dollars.

The sum requisite for the payment of the dividends amounts to something more than two millions of dollars; there will, therefore, under the most favourable view, still be a deficiency remaining to be provided for from some other part of the revenue; it will, however, be so trifling, that if the expectations of the minister are realised, and the sums now appropriated to discharge the interest of the debt are strictly applied to that purpose, the creditors of the republic will have no reason to be dissatisfied with the arrangements which have been made for their future security.

CHAPTER V.

Natural wealth of Colombia—Cordilleras—their effect upon Character of Population—and Climate—Agriculture—Cacao—Coffee—Indigo—Cotton—Tobacco—Dyewoods—Rice—Sugar—Wheat.—Pastoral wealth—Cultivation of the Vine—Obstructions to agricultural Industry.

NOTWITHSTANDING the good intentions of the Colombian government, and the measures they have adopted to maintain their credit, and discharge their pecuniary obligations; it is obvious that, when left to their own resources, as they now certainly are, the hopes of their creditors must eventually rest upon the natural riches of the country: it becomes, therefore, an important consideration to persons interested in the present solvency and future prosperity of Colombia, to inquire in what these riches consist, and what are the means of rendering them available for the purposes of commerce and revenue.

In every part of the globe, agriculture is a main source of national wealth; but the peculiar value given to tropical productions by the demand of the large portion of the world to whose climate they are denied, adds greatly, in Colombia, to the advantages generally derived from this pursuit.

That country likewise, from the configuration of its surface, enjoys such a variety of climate, that every production of the vegetable kingdom is found within its territory; it may, therefore, be rendered independent of foreign supply, for either the necessaries or luxuries of life derived from this source; whilst some of the articles of its own produce are scarcely found in any other part of the world, and many of them are of a quality which will always ensure them a preference in the markets of Europe; these circumstances are well calculated to stimulate the industry of the inhabitants of that country; and such is its extent and the fertility of its soil, that as its population increases there will be scarcely any conceivable limit to the quantity of its productions.

In the mineral kingdom, nature has been equally lavish of her bounties, every metallic produce of the earth, which has been made subservient to the use of man, being found in abundance in Colombia, either in the bosom of her mountains or on the surface of her soil; and when these valuable materials can be procured with less labour, and at less expense than are requisite for the production of the articles for which they can be exchanged, they may justly be considered as natural riches.

The two states which compose the present

republic of Colombia have been generally distinguished by a contrast of their natural productions—New Granada having been considered as a country of wheat and mines, and Venezuela of those products which, being the only objects of cultivation in the insular colonies of the Caribbean sea, are known in commerce by the name of colonial productions. It will be seen, however, that a very considerable part of New Granada is a low and humid country, subject to the extremes of tropical heat, and capable of bringing to maturity the produce peculiar to the torrid zone, and that some parts of Venezuela are capable of producing the cereal plants and fruits of Europe, whilst others are not destitute of mineral wealth.

Colombia is indebted for the variety in its climate, and the diversity of its vegetable productions, to the chain of mountains which enters its southern frontier on the shores of the Pacific, and, separating itself into three distinct branches, traverses the greater part of its extent. These mountains, which are a prolongation of the Cordillera of the Andes of Peru, enter the province of Jaen de Bracamoros in six degrees south latitude, at the distance of about forty miles from the Pacific Ocean, and continue in an undivided ridge till they reach Loja, where the first of those

bifurcations occur, which impart so peculiar a character to New Granada.

The mean width of this range of mountains is about fifty miles in those parts where it forms a single and undivided chain; but in many places it is divided into two separate ridges, which run nearly parallel to each other for a short distance, and again unite, inclosing between them longitudinal vallies, varying in their elevation, above the level of the sea, according to the distance from each other of the chains of mountains, on whose declivities they are sustained. These vallies, although subject to the action of the ardent rays of a tropical sun, enjoy a cool and temperate climate, and are the seats of cultivation, in which some of the richest and most populous cities of Colombia are found.

The first of these ramifications occurs, as before mentioned, at Loja, in 3° 15′ south lat., which, continuing to 2° 17′ south lat. the mountains there join again in the knot of Asuay, and inclose the valley of Cuenca, in which is situated the city of that name, containing about twenty thousand inhabitants. The mean temperature of this valley is about 60° Fahrenheit, and its elevation 8,100 feet above the level of the sea. In estimating the temperature of different elevations within the tropics, we may generally allow a diminution of one de-

gree below that of the country on a level with the sea, (about 84° Fahrenheit,) for every 300 feet of elevation; this is not quite accurate, but it is the nearest approximation to the truth which can be determined in round numbers, and will be found, in most instances, to convey a sufficient knowledge of climate for agricultural purposes; there are, however, in many parts of the country, local circumstances which affect the temperature; such, for instance, as the vicinity of a Páramo or Nevada, or the sea-breeze on the coast, where the thermometer stands lower than at places in the interior at a greater elevation.

At Asuay the mountains again separate and form the valley of Hambato, which extends to within 40′ of the equator. In the branches of this division we meet with the snowy summits of Chimborazo, and the volcano of Sangay; and in its plain, which has an elevation of 7,920 feet, is situated the populous city of Riobamba. From the Alto de Chisinche, which terminates it towards the north, a third bifurcation, which extends to 20′ north latitude, incloses the rich and fertile valley which contains the city of Quito, the most populous in Colombia, containing nearly forty thousand inhabitants; and the mountains again meet in the knot of Los Pastos, in the centre of which is the province of that name, inhabited by

the warlike tribe of Indians who have been before mentioned. In the eastern Cordillera of this bipartition are seen the Nevadas of Guamani, Cayambe, and Imbabura; in the western, those of Atacayo, Pichincha, and Cotocache: the plain is at an elevation of 8,040 feet, and the equinoctial line, crossing the summit of Cayambe, intersects it in the Villa de San Antonio de Lulumbamba. At the northern extremity of the mountains of Los Pastos, another division takes place in 1° 13′ north latitude, which incloses the table-land of Almaguer, placed at an elevation of 6,960 feet, and terminated by another group of mountains in 2° 5′ north latitude. In the eastern branch of this bifurcation is situated the great Alpine lake of Sebondoy; and from this Cordillera the rivers Cauca and Magdalena take their rise. In this point, likewise, this stupendous ridge is broken down into three separate and distinct chains, which unite no more, and in their progress towards the north lose much of the majestic feature which has hitherto marked their course.

These three ranges of mountains have been named the Eastern, the Central and the Western Cordilleras of New Granada; the two first branch off from the Cordillera, forming the eastern boundary of the basin of Almaguer, and run parallel to each other and at no great distance apart, bound-

ing the valley through which the river Magdalena pursues its course, till they reach 5° north latitude; the Eastern Cordillera here takes a north-easterly direction, skirting the eastern side of the department of Cundinamarca, and running through that of Boyacá to the Sierra Nevada of Merida, and meets the waters of the Caribbean Sea in the province of Coro; from whence it takes a direction along the coast towards the east, and although in reality a continuation of the eastern Cordillera, is here distinguished by the denomination of the Chain of the Coast. The eastern declivity of this Cordillera is so precipitous, that it affords no space for cultivation; but on its western descent recline the great plain of Bogotá and those of Tunja, Socorro, and Pamplona; forming together the most extensive table-land of Colombia, great part of which is situated at an elevation of more than 8,000 feet above the level of the sea. These elevated lands do not traverse the whole space included between the eastern and central Cordillera, as is the case with all the basins formed by the bifurcation of the mountains to the southward of Almaguer, but terminating rather abruptly on their approach to the Magdalena, the bed of that river forms the real level of the valley: this, from Neiva to Honda, has an elevation of 1,200 feet above the sea, and from Honda to Mompox of 600

feet. This valley extends along 9°, of latitude, and is open to the north, where the waters of its river fall into the ocean, being of all those formed by these divisions of the mountain-chain, the only one which is not inclosed by a re-union of their rocks.

The central Cordillera pursues its course in a northerly direction with little deviation, till it is lost in the group of mountains which occupy the greater part of the province of Antroquia: a part of these, bending to the west, complete the inclosure of the valley of Cauca, and others continue the central Cordillera to meet the Caribbean Sea on the coast of Carthagena. This Cordillera separates the vallies of the Magdalena and Cauca; but the difference of the level of these two parallel basins is very remarkable, that of the Cauca being elevated 3,000 feet above the sea—this arises from the circumstance of the former having no obstruction to the discharge of its waters—whilst those of the latter are held up by the mountains which form the northern boundary of the valley, and over which they are obliged to force their way for nearly fifty leagues, from the Salto de San Antonio to the Boca del Espiritu Santo. The valley of Cauca thus imprisoned between the central and western Cordillera, and the mountains of Antioquia, although not so extensive as that of the

Magdalena, is one of the richest districts of Colombia; it is, however, so inaccessible, owing to the difficulty of passing the mountains, the summits of which must be crossed before it can be entered, that its agricultural wealth cannot be rendered available for the purposes of commerce.

The western Cordillera is a continuation of the western branch of the mountains forming the basin of Almaguer, and runs along the coast of the Pacific, till it enters the Isthmus, which it traverses, and continues its course to the northern regions of the American continent. Besides these chains of the Cordilleras, there is on the northern coast of Colombia, at the back of the city of Santa Martha, an insulated group of mountains, whose tops rise into the region of perpetual snow, and which, from their extent and the variety of climate they afford, may at some future period present an interesting field to the agriculturist.

This mountainous region of Colombia is, through half its extent, that is, from the southern frontier to 2° 5′ north latitude, volcanic, and subject to severe and continual earthquakes: in this part, likewise, there are numerous Nevadas, or summits, covered with perpetual snow. After the tripartition of the mountain-chain to the north of the basin of Almaguer, both volcanoes and Nevadas become more rare, the only volcanic summits being those

of Sotara and Puracé, situated in 2° 20′ north latitude, in the central Cordillera, in which, likewise, we meet with the Nevadas of Baragüan and Tolima, near Quindiu, the most frequented passage by which the valley of Cauca is entered from Bogotá. The latter of these Nevadas is the highest mountain in any of the chains of the Andes to the north of the equator, being 17,190 feet above the sea. In the eastern Cordillera there are no volcanoes, and the only Nevadas are those of Chita, 5° 50′, and Muenchies, 8° 12′ north latitude: in the western Cordillera there are neither volcanoes nor Nevadas. Notwithstanding that there are no volcanoes in the mountains of the north of Colombia, that part of the country is by no means secure from earthquakes: at Cumaná, near the eastern extremity of the littoral chain, they have always been severely felt; the catastrophe at Caraccas, in 1812, is still fresh in the memory of its inhabitants, and within the last few months Bogotá has narrowly escaped a similar destruction.

I have been thus minute in the description of the Cordilleras of Colombia, in order to show the position of the insulated vallies, which, situated amidst their lofty summits, had been long the seats of industry and civilisation, previous to the conquest of the Americas by Spain. These "aërial islets," as they have been aptly termed, are sur-

rounded by mountains, which can in few places be passed, except on foot, or upon the backs of human beings, who gain their livelihood by supplying the place of beasts of burden; and their inhabitants being thus in a great measure cut off from intercourse with the world, are held in a state of seclusion, which has an influence on their moral and physical character, productive of important political effects.

Every person who has had intercourse with the natives of Colombia has remarked, that there is a great want of cordiality between the inhabitants of these mountainous districts and those of the torrid regions of the plains and coasts. This unfriendly feeling has been sometimes attributed to the circumstance of the greater part of the latter description of country having formed a separate state under the dominion of Spain, whose selfish policy encouraged these jealousies between her different dependencies as a means of securing her own supremacy. But, as, since the change in the political relations of those countries, this antipathy, instead of diminishing, seems to be more extensively developed, and to have acquired additional strength, it must, I think, be rather ascribed to the discordant modifications of habits and manners produced by diversity of climate and position; and, so far from subsiding, it may be expected to

be durable as the configuration of country to which it owes its origin.

The inhabitants of Colombia, in speaking of the climate of their country, usually divide it into three regions, which they distinguish by the names of *tierras calientes, templadas, y frias* (hot, temperate, and cold regions); such denominations are somewhat vague, as the limits of these divisions are not very accurately defined: the *tierras calientes* may, however, be considered as comprising all the country situated at a lower elevation than that of two thousand feet above the level of the sea: the *templadas*, such parts of it as lie between that height and six thousand feet; and the *frias*, those which rise from this last elevation to the limit of perpetual snow.

That part of the agricultural produce of Colombia, which forms, at present, or may hereafter constitute, the basis of her commerce, consists of cacao, coffee, indigo, cotton, tobacco, dye-woods, rice, and sugar: she now exports considerable quantities of some of these articles, and nothing is wanting but industry in the people, and wise regulations on the part of the government, to bring most of them to such a state of perfection, as will enable them to compete, in foreign markets, with similar produce from any countries in the world. The products grown exclusively for the

consumption of the country, are the cerealia and fruits of Europe—maize, the potatoe, the plantain, and all the nutritious roots known in the West Indies by the name of ground-provisions. I shall give a succinct account of the state of each of these branches of agriculture, and of the districts in which they are carried on, accompanied by such statistical remarks as may afford data for estimating the quantity and value of these several productions.

The shrub which bears the cacao-nut, from which chocolate is made, is indigenous to Colombia; but the use of its nutritious fruit was not known till some time after the conquest, when it was introduced from Mexico, and soon became generally prevalent. This tree delights in a moist and warm climate, and requires, while young, to be shaded from the ardent rays of the tropical sun by some umbrageous plant: the erythrina is generally grown for that purpose, whence it has acquired the name of *la madre del cacao*, (the mother of the cacao tree). It does not come into full bearing till after eight or nine years' growth: a temporary sacrifice of capital must therefore be incurred in the establishment of a plantation of this tree; but it becomes a fortune for the family of the provident planter, as it continues in produce from twenty to thirty years, bearing two crops a

year, and requires little further trouble or expense, one labourer being sufficient for the management of one thousand trees, which will produce, upon an average, twelve fanegas of cacao. According to Humboldt, Venezuela, before the revolution, produced, from 16,000,000 trees, nearly 200,000 fanegas (of 110 lbs. each) of cacao, valued at 5,000,000 dollars, of which 140,000 were exported, leaving a quantity for home consumption greatly exceeding its present export. Venezuela at that time produced two-thirds of all the cacao used in the world.

During the interruption of intercourse between Spain and her transmarine possessions, occasioned by the wars in which she was engaged in Europe, the cultivation of this produce declined greatly, in consequence of the cacao-nut being a very perishable article, which cannot be kept in store for more than a year without injury: in the revolutionary war, likewise, this branch of agriculture suffered more than any other; for the cultivation of a plant, which requires so much time and attention before it can be brought to perfection, was little suited to a period in which the state of property was so precarious. The produce of the cacao-tree in Venezuela is said to be on the decline, and the natives attribute it to the deterioration of the soil. Humboldt, however, is of

opinion, that it is rather to be ascribed to a diminution of moisture in the climate, in consequence of the extension of cultivation, and the clearing of the land, which is, I think, a much more probable conjecture; for such a shrub as that which produces the cacao is not of a nature to exhaust a soil.

As the causes which tended to diminish the cultivation of cacao have now ceased to operate, it will, doubtless, be resumed with activity; for there are so few parts of the world adapted to its growth, that Colombia may be almost considered as monopolising this branch of trade. The coast of Venezuela, and the country found the lake of Maracaybo, have always been celebrated for this produce; Guayaquil likewise, at the opposite extremity of the Colombian territory, supplies the market with a considerable quantity; and there is scarcely any other part of the American continent, except Goatemala, in which it is cultivated as an article of commerce. The cacao, grown in the neighbourhood of Cumaná, and in the vallies of Caraccas and Aragua, has been hitherto most esteemed; it has likewise the advantage of being so near the coast, that great facility is afforded for its exportation. That which is exported from Carthagena comes partly, by the circuitous route of the Isthmus, from Guayaquil, and the remainder

is brought down the Magdalena, from the neighbourhood of Cúcuta, in the province of Pamplona: the produce of this latter district will, however, now that the river Zulia, which takes its rise in that province, is navigated by steam-boats, be exported through Maracaybo. The provinces of Santa Martha, Mompox, and Mariquita, are also, in many parts, well adapted to the growth of cacao; and from their situation on the river Magdalena, their produce may be exported at little expense.

When, from the circumstances above-mentioned, the cultivation of cacao decreased in Venezuela, that of coffee was substituted in its place, principally on account of the advantages which that produce afforded in its capability of preserving its qualities for a longer period, and consequently of being kept in store till a favourable opportunity was presented for its exportation. The coffee shrub is much more hardy than that of the cacao, and is brought to maturity at a much lower temperature: it may be grown, likewise, on a drier soil, and comes into profit in much less time, flowering in the second year of its growth, and being in full bearing in its third. This branch of agriculture is at present principally carried on in the valleys of Caraccas and Aragua, where the soil and climate are extremely favourable to the quality

of the coffee, although its quantity is below the average crop of the West India Islands, and other parts of the world where it is grown. In the year 1812, this produce amounted to sixty thousand quintals, of which forty thousand were exported. It will be seen, therefore, from the statement of exports,* that the produce of coffee has increased during the revolutionary war, and that it at present forms the most important article of the exports of Colombia; coffee, however, is by no means so generally in use amongst the natives as chocolate. The cultivation of the coffee-tree has been already introduced into the provinces of Santa Martha and Mariquita; indeed, wherever a mountain is found within the tropics, there will be always on its sides an elevation favourable to the growth of this tree. The three great chains of the Cordilleras, therefore, by which Colombia is intersected, present such an extent of surface adapted to this produce, that were her population commensurate with her territory, she might grow coffee enough for the consumption of all Europe.

Indigo was one of the earliest productions of Venezuela, and was formerly a very considerable article in its exports: but the want of a free intercourse with Europe, where alone it had any value, first checked its cultivation; and as it is a

* Page 162.

produce that must undergo the process of a manufacture before it can be brought into a state for exportation, the war of the revolution, by the destruction of the works, and converting the slaves employed in them into soldiers, put an entire stop to it. Although the restoration of tranquillity has removed the causes which occasioned the decline of this branch of agriculture, there still remain circumstances, which will in all probability prevent any great extension of its present growth; for, notwithstanding the excellent quality of the indigo of Colombia, which, with that of Goatemala, still commands the highest price in the European markets, the extensive cultivation of this plant in the British possessions in India, and the skill and intelligence of the agents of the British factory in that country, aided by the capital of the Company, have opened a source for the supply of Europe with indigo, which will materially affect this branch of the commerce of the western world. For some purposes, the indigo of Colombia and Goatemala is still preferred, on account of the superiority of its tint; but the strength of its dye is supposed to be inferior to that of the East Indian indigo; and by the improvements which have already taken place in the manufacture of this article in the East, it is expected that it will soon rival that of America

in quality. If the indigo of India can be brought to this state of perfection, it may eventually succeed in excluding this produce of Colombia from the European market; for the price of labour is much lower in India than in Colombia, and the difference of freight, in an article of such value, is scarcely worth notice. The cultivation of indigo in Colombia has been hitherto confined almost exclusively to Venezuela, although it may be grown in any part of its tropical climate. In prosperous times, the quantity of this article exported amounted to upwards of a million of pounds, worth in the country between two and three hundred thousand dollars; and Humboldt says, that the whole of it was grown upon an extent of ground not exceeding four or five square leagues.

Cotton is a plant indigenous to Colombia, and to the growth of which her climate and soil are admirably adapted: its cultivation, however, has so much decreased of late years, that those parts of the country which were dependent upon it for support, have been involved in great distress. Previous to the revolution, the quantity of this article of produce exported from that part of the coast of Colombia, which was formerly comprised in the Captain-generalship of Caraccas, amounted to between two and three millions of pounds, and

from the coast of New Granada it was still greater. By a reference to the exports from Laguira and Porto Cabello, it will be seen that the present growth in that part of the country is, comparatively, insignificant, and a proportionate decrease has taken place in the western provinces.

The causes which have been described as influencing the cultivation of cacao and indigo, have not operated to the discouragement of that of cotton—as it is a branch of agriculture which requires less labour and capital than any other in the country: the check which it has received has arisen from the great depreciation of the price of this article in the markets of Europe; for the very inferior value of the cotton of Colombia, compared with that of the northern continent of America, does not allow the former to come into the market at a remunerating price, unless the latter is sold at a rate of exorbitant profit. Within ten years of the present time, cotton has been sold in the province of Carthagena, at from twenty to thirty dollars a quintal; and the price now varies at from six to eight dollars: even at this latter price, however, it might be grown with a fair remuneration to the cultivator; but that does not satisfy persons who had enjoyed the profits of the former high prices, and the cultivation has been, in many parts, discontinued. In the departments of Ma-

turin, Venezuela, and Zulia, this depreciation in the value of cotton has not materially affected the agriculturist, as he relinquished the cultivation of an article which barely repaid his labours, and adopted some other, which he found to be more lucrative: but, in the province of Carthagena, great part of which is not adapted to the growth of any other produce, considerable inconvenience has been felt, both by the labouring population, and the foreign merchants, who purchased their cotton with the manufactures of Europe.

One great drawback to the value of Colombian cotton is the imperfect manner in which it is cleaned: this operation is still performed, in the greater part of the cotton-country, by hand, and is a task generally allotted to the women, who, placing a small quantity of the cotton upon the ground, beat it with small sticks till they think it sufficiently free from the seed: a good hand at this work can, with difficulty, clean more than an arroba a day; and it is then very imperfectly done, many of the seeds being still left in the wool: they earn about two reals an arroba. In North America the cotton is all cleaned by machinery; a powerful gin will clean several quintals in a day, at one-fourth part of the expense of the old method, and so perfectly, that in whole bales not a single seed will be found. I have heard it

asserted, that these machines, by tearing the cotton, injure its staple, and render it less valuable for some manufactures. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the subject, to know whether this be a valid objection, but I have seen a very simple and cheap machine, called a rolling gin, in use in the little island of San Andres, where a very fine cotton is grown, by which a man can clean four arrobas a day, rendering it perfectly free from the seed, and without at all injuring the staple. I believe this machine is likewise in use in some parts of the coast of Georgia, where the valuable growth, known in commerce by the name of Sea-Island cotton, is produced; and it is extraordinary that an adherence to old habits and customs should have hitherto prevented its introduction on the continent of South America.

Independently, however, of this defective mode of cleaning the Colombian cotton, it is said to be decidedly inferior in quality not only to the Sea-Island, but also to the upland cottons of North America; and I am inclined to think that this inferiority is in a great measure owing to the imperfect manner in which all agricultural operations are carried on in Colombia; and that if the land was prepared for this crop with as much attention in that country as in the United States, the quality of the cotton might at least be greatly

improved, even if it could not be brought to an equality with the Sea-Island. If, by such means, the price of Colombian cotton could be brought anything near that of North American, no crop in the country would pay so well, for the cost of raising it is much less than in the United States. In the first place, land is much cheaper than in those States of North America in which the best cotton is grown; indeed, its only value is that of the labour bestowed upon it; and labour is procured at a much lower rate. This plant, likewise, in the United States, is an annual, not being able to bear the severity even of a Georgian or Carolinian winter: it is, therefore, necessary to prepare the land, and plant the seed for this crop every year; but in Colombia it is a perennial, and will continue in productive bearing for five or six years, even under their present system of agriculture; and probably, if the ground was well cleaned and manured, it might be continued much longer.

In the province of Carthagena, cotton is raised in the following manner:—a piece of ground being selected from the forest for the purpose of making a cotton-field, the timber and underwood are cut down at the commencement of the dry season, trees of any magnitude being left at the height of five or six feet from the ground: the wood is

suffered to lie upon the ground to dry, till a short time previous to the setting in of the periodical rains which fall about the end of April: it is then burnt, and the fertility of the virgin soil increased by the coating of ashes: the expense of clearing land in this manner is about five dollars a fanegada. The surface is never disturbed by the plough, or any other instrument; but as soon as it is sufficiently softened by the rain, a crop of maize is planted, the seed being dibbled in rows, at intervals of five or six feet, about double that distance being left between the rows: as soon as the corn makes its appearance, the seed of the cotton is planted in the same manner between the rows of the maize: in about three months the maize is ripe, and is either carried off the ground, or the stalks broken near the top for the purpose of leaving the ear inverted, by which means the rain is prevented from penetrating into it, and it is left thus, till the succeeding crop is ripe, when both are taken off the ground together: the corn is found to keep in this manner better than if housed. The land is then cleaned, and, previous to the autumnal rains, another crop of maize is planted, which ripens towards the end of the year, and the whole of the corn is then carried: the cotton having been sheltered during the greater part of its growth

by the successive crops of maize, is then cleaned, and left to itself, and no other care is bestowed upon it, except that of annually cleaning it, and gathering the crop, so long as it is in sufficient quantity to defray this expense. When it is so far exhausted as to be no longer profitable, the field is thrown up; or, to use a West Indian term, is allowed to become ruinate, and a fresh piece of woodland is brought into cultivation by a similar process. As the land never receives any tillage, and, before the cotton is brought to maturity, has been already exhausted by two successive crops of maize, taken within the short space of nine months, the produce thus obtained may be rather considered as given by the bounty of nature, than raised by the industry of man; and it is probable that it is far from having attained the perfection of which it is capable.

It is needless to expatiate upon the advantages which Colombia would derive from such an improvement in the cultivation of her cotton, as would raise it to an equality with that of North America: but it may be remarked, that England would also probably reap considerable benefit from it, both in a commercial and political point of view; for it would enable her to transfer her purchase of the raw material of one of the most important of her manufactures, from a country which, by con-

tinually increasing the rate of its duties upon the importation of articles of British manufacture, is manifestly endeavouring to exclude them from its ports, to another, which receives, at present, from England the greater part of the manufactures which it consumes, and which will become a still better customer to her looms, as its means of purchase are increased by a more extensive sale of the produce of its soil.

The cultivation of tobacco is, as has been already mentioned, so much discouraged by the baneful effects of the government monopoly, that this produce now scarcely forms an article of export, although the soil and climate of Colombia are so well adapted to the growth of this plant, that, were it free from this vexatious impost, it might constitute one of the most lucrative branches of its agriculture. It may be grown of a good quality, in almost every part of the country, where the elevation does not reduce the mean temperature below 70° Fahrenheit; but there are some districts distinguished by a growth, of a flavour superior even to the best of those of the island of Cuba: such are Cumanacoa, in the neighbourhood of Cumaná, many parts of the province of Varinas, and Ambalema, in the department of Cundinamarca.

The dye-woods of America have long formed

an important branch of its commerce with Europe; and there is no part of the western continent which produces them in greater abundance or variety than Colombia: those in greatest demand are Nicaragua and Bressilleta wood, fustic and logwood; considerable quantities of which have, for a great length of time, been exported from the maritime provinces of the republic formerly comprised in the Viceroyalty of New Granada.

In the interior of the provinces of Rio Hacha and Santa Martha, there are extensive forests, which afford an inexhaustible supply of the Nicaragua wood, and as it is burthened with no cost of production, the only expenses attending it are those of cutting and transporting it to the coast: this latter is, however, considerable; for the greater part of it is brought through the woods to Rio Hacha on beasts of burthen, but the high price at which it is sold leaves a very handsome profit to the persons who engage in this traffic.

This tree is also found in abundance in the woods intersected by the river Cesar, which falls into the Magdalena, below Ocaña; and it was a favourite project with the Spanish governors of these provinces, to improve the navigation of that river, for the purpose of facilitating the export of this valuable produce. The navigation of the

Magdalena by steam-boats will, in all probability, again direct the attention either of the government or of some spirited individuals to this object; and if it can be effected, it will necessarily cause a material reduction of the price at which this article can be brought into the European market. Fustic and logwood are found in the woods, in almost every part of the country, but they are not of a very good quality; and, unless immediately on the coast, or the banks of some navigable river, the expense of transport is so great compared with their value, that they are not worth cutting.

There is also a great quantity of very fine timber in Colombia, and in situations extremely favourable for exportation: some of it is of a superior quality for ship-building, and there is, likewise, excellent mahogany, and other ornamental woods; but, owing to the total want of roads and wheel-carriages of any description, the attempt to move a large tree, if felled at any distance from the bank of a river, is so impracticable, that little attention has been hitherto paid to the advantages which might be derived from this branch of commerce.

Rice is a crop that may be grown with profit in most parts of Colombia; but the district best adapted to its cultivation is the country bordering

on the river Sinú, in the western part of the province of Carthagena, where it is produced in sufficient quantity to supply the city of Carthagena and many other parts of the country, but it has not yet been an article of export. The rice of Colombia is of a very inferior quality, owing principally to the defective mode of tillage: its value is likewise still further depreciated by the negligent manner in which it is dressed and prepared for market: it is, however, in very general use amongst the natives; and if proper attention was paid to its cultivation, it might form a lucrative branch of the export trade of the country.

The sugar-cane is a plant which flourishes in every part of Colombia which is situated at a lower elevation than that of two thousand feet above the level of the sea; and even in parts of the Valley of Caraccas, it may be cultivated with success: but the Valleys of Aragua, and the province of Varinas, in the departments of Venezuela and the Orinoco, the provinces of Santa Martha and Mompox, in the department of the Magdalena, and that of Mariquita, in the department of Cundinamarca, are the situations best adapted to this cultivation, and where it is carried on to the greatest extent. During the war, the trapiches, or works erected in different parts of the country, for the fabrication of sugar, were for the most

part destroyed, or fell into a state of dilapidation; and, as few of the proprietors have since possessed the means of repairing them, the cultivation of this produce has greatly decreased.

Previous to the revolution, it was principally carried on by the slave population; for, as it is the most laborious agricultural employment within the tropics, every person who could choose his occupation, engaged rather in such as required less exertion. There is, therefore, no branch of agriculture in which the change in the condition of the labourers will be so much felt as in the growth of sugar; for, in most places, it would now be difficult even to collect a sufficient number of hands to enable persons who might possess the necessary capital, to carry on the work of an extensive sugar plantation: it would be still more so, to induce them to confine themselves to this occupation; and, in such an uncertainty of being able to procure labour, no person would risk the loss of the capital necessary to be invested in the plant of a sugar-work, which, to be carried on with success, must be of considerable magnitude. I do not mean here to discuss the topic of free labour within the tropics, or to examine whether the growth of sugar and slavery must necessarily be abolished together; for, whatever may be the case in the West Indian Islands, I know by expe-

rience, that, notwithstanding all that has been said in Europe of the indolence of the natives of South America, and their disinclination to labour, persons who are acquainted with their habits, and will humour them a little, may procure labourers who will steadily perform at a cheap rate, if not so much work as a European labourer, at least sufficient for all the purposes of agriculture in that country; but I think it may be affirmed that, till the population of such countries as Colombia becomes more dense, the labouring part of it will not easily be induced, even by higher wages, to engage in the more laborious and irksome employments, whilst so many easier and more engaging modes of earning their livelihood are presented to their choice.

Sugar has never been grown in Colombia in sufficient quantity to admit of its exportation; and, at present, although the importation of this article is prohibited, and the price in some parts of the country is occasionally very high, the quantity grown is scarcely adequate to the home consumption. The extraction of the sugar from the cane is conducted in a very imperfect manner in Colombia; for, instead of completing the process of granulation, the inspissation of the juice is carried no further than the production of a mixture of molasses and mucilaginous matter, which as-

sumes, when cold, a concrete form, and is made into small cakes, in which state it is called *Panela*, of which the natives are extremely fond—who eat it with their *Boyo* and *Casava*, in the same manner that cheese is eaten with bread in Europe: it is highly nutritive, and not unpleasant. This *Panela* is likewise employed in the preparation of chocolate and sweetmeats, which are almost the only uses to which saccharine produce is applied in Colombia, and for which it is preferred to sugar.

The agricultural productions above specified are those of which Colombia raises not only as much as is necessary for her own use, but also a sufficiency to exchange for those objects, either of necessity or luxury, which she is at present incapable of providing by her own industry or skill; and such is the extent and fertility of country suitable to their growth, that the quantity she now produces bears a very small proportion to that which, under more favourable circumstances, she might supply.

The productions raised exclusively for the maintenance of her population are, in the *tierras calientes*, maize, the plantain, and the different descriptions of roots—such as yams, yucas, &c., known in the British colonies by the appellation of ground-provisions; and in the *tierras frias*, the cerealia and legumina, together with the fruits,

and all the bulbous and tuberous roots, which are cultivated in the higher latitudes of Europe and North America.

Maize, or Indian corn, is grown in abundance in every part of Colombia, there being no plant which can accommodate itself to so great a range of temperature: it supplies a nutritious food for the labouring class of people in the *tierras calientes*, who use it as one of the substitutes for wheaten bread: its preparation, as an article of food, forms one of the principal and most laborious occupations of the women, by whom it is pounded in large wooden mortars; and after it has been thus reduced into a coarse sort of meal, it is sifted and made into a paste, which, being boiled, acquires a great degree of consistency, and is, when fresh made, by no means unpleasant to the taste; in this state it is called *Boyo*. Maize is likewise in general use as a horse-corn, and great quantities of pigs, and poultry of every description, are also raised upon it.

The plantain, which to the inhabitants of the tropics is what the potatoe has become to the poor of Ireland, affords at all times of the year an abundant supply of food: in its green state, the fruit of this plant, when roasted, forms a substitute for bread; when boiled, for vegetables; and when ripe, it is a delicious fruit. In the formation of a

plantain walk, the plants are set in rows, at a distance of four or five yards from each other, and require, during the early part of their growth, to be kept clean from weeds: they come into bearing the second year, when they attain the height of about ten feet, and continue in profit for eight or ten years, requiring, during that time, little other care than that of gathering the fruit, which grows in clusters of from twenty to thirty in a bunch, each of the size of an ordinary cucumber, which they somewhat resemble in shape, and are inclosed in a thick rind, similar to the pod of an English bean. Bryan Edwards, in his History of Jamaica, calculates, that an acre of plantains produces a sufficient quantity of food for the annual sustenance of twenty persons; and some other authors give even a still higher estimate of the productive and nutritious powers of this plant. Yams and yuca are likewise produced in abundance in Colombia, and of a fine quality: from the latter of these roots, a valuable substitute for bread is made, called *Casava*; it is procured by a process similar to that used for making starch from the potatoe, and is formed into thin cakes, somewhat resembling in appearance the oaten cake of the north of England.

Notwithstanding the proximity of Colombia to the equator, there are so many situations in that

country where the cerealia of Europe can be grown, that if she possessed greater facilities of communication between the different parts of her territory, her own produce of these articles would soon be amply sufficient for her consumption : but so defective is the present state, not only of her roads, but even of her channels of conveyance by water ; and so imperfect is the system of agriculture in those parts of the country, whose elevation affords the temperature most suitable to those productions, that, although the importation of flour is burthened with a heavy duty, the whole coast of Colombia is supplied from the United States with this article, which is now considered as a necessary of life by all persons whose circumstances enable them to procure it.

The climate of the low countries within the torrid zone is not generally favourable to the growth of wheat, although it does not appear that an augmentation of heat is prejudicial to it, unless attended with excess of drought or moisture ; in the first of which cases it necessarily perishes, and in the latter, the luxuriance of vegetation prevents the formation of an ear : but it is nevertheless produced in great perfection in many parts of the provinces of Venezuela and Zulia, and even at so low a level as the valleys of Aragua, where the ordinary temperature is not more than nine degrees

below that of the coast: the elevated vallies of this part of the Cordillera do not, however, present a sufficient breadth of surface to allow of an extensive cultivation of this grain; and at the same time, the produce peculiar to the tropics, which can likewise be grown in those situations, is found to afford a better profit.

It is therefore on the elevated and extensive table-lands of Cundinamarca and Boyacá, where the mean heat of the year is about that of the mean heat of the summer in Scotland, that the greatest quantity of wheat is at present grown, and it is from that district that the whole of Colombia may at some future period expect to receive its supply. In these parts of the country the cerealia and legumina of Europe are produced in extraordinary abundance; for not only is the average produce of a crop, which may be estimated at five quarters an acre, much greater than in Europe, but, owing to their situation with respect to the sun, which is twice vertical, and at nearly equal intervals, within the year, they have two regular seasons, each of sufficient length to bring the grain to perfection: they may, therefore, draw two crops a year from the land, and although it would not be good husbandry to take two successive culmiferous crops, yet their alternation with a leguminous crop, or with one of

some of the bulbous or tuberous roots, would be a produce from land which the best systems of agriculture would by no means afford in the temperate zones of the globe.

The potatoe is considered by the native as an indigenous production of Colombia, and it is not worth while to dispute with him on a subject which has occasioned so much controversy as that of the origin of this plant, for it is of more importance to the practical agriculturist to know where this valuable root may be grown, than from whence it came; it is, therefore, sufficient to remark, that it is brought to great perfection in most parts of the *tierras templadas* and *frias* of that country.

In addition to these principal vegetable productions of Colombia, a number of others may be mentioned, which, although not collected in sufficient quantities to constitute, separately, branches of commerce worth notice, form an aggregate of some importance: such are the Quinquina or Peruvian bark, which is produced in abundance in many parts of New Granada; the Cortex Angosturæ, or bark of the Orinoco; the sarsaparilla of the Rio Negro; the vanilla of the Orinoco, the Tonga bean, and other aromatics; the cochineal of Carora, and of the valley of Taupa; the lignum quassiæ; a number of resins and precious gums; castor oil, and the oil of the cocoa nut, which

Humboldt considers as the olive of South America, and which might probably afford a very lucrative branch of trade, although it is at present prepared, in any considerable quantity, only in the province of Cumaná.

The grape has never yet, I believe, been cultivated in Colombia for the purpose of making wine, its growth having been always strictly prohibited by the Spanish government, but it is found in all parts of the country as a garden fruit; and as excellent wine is made in Chili and Mexico, there can be little doubt but that numerous situations might be found in Colombia in which the climate and soil would be well adapted to this production. This is a subject of the utmost importance to that country, and I understand that some gentlemen are now engaged in making the necessary preparations for cultivating the vine there on an extensive scale.

In the enumeration of the territorial riches of Colombia, we must not omit to mention its pastoral wealth: this arises principally from the immense herds of horses and cattle bred upon the vast plains which are bounded by the river Orinoco, the Eastern Cordillera, and the chain of the coast, extending over a surface of 153,000 square miles, and generally designated by the name of the Llanos. At the conquest they were perfectly

desert, their only inhabitants being the alligator and the tiger; but the Spaniards introduced into them the horses and cattle of Europe, and they have increased so wonderfully, that it is now difficult to ascertain their numbers. M. Depons, who resided for some time in Venezuela, previous to the revolution, calculated that there were then on these plains 1,200,000 oxen, 180,000 horses, and 90,000 mules; but Humboldt, judging from the number of hides, horses, and mules annually exported, thinks this estimate much too low. The export of hides from the ports of Venezuela amounted at that time to 174,000; the cattle, likewise, afforded an export of 200,000 arrobas of Tasajo, or meat salted and dried in the sun, and a very considerable trade was formerly carried on in this article between New Barcelona, a port on the northern coast of Colombia, and the island of Cuba, where it was purchased by the planters as food for their slaves. Horses, mules, and horned cattle were likewise exported in great numbers from this port, and from Coro, to the different West Indian islands; but the heavy tax now laid upon their export has greatly diminished this branch of trade: for the larger islands, in consequence of the increase thus occasioned in their price, have turned their attention to the breeding of horses and cattle, and this is now found to be

one of the most profitable methods of employing their land. Besides these innumerable herds of the plains, the woods in almost all parts of the country, where the climate is warm or temperate, are full of cattle, and on the table-lands of Bogotá there is a great number of sheep, which thrive in that climate, and produce a good quality both of flesh and fleece.

In consequence of this abundance of the productions of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, provisions are plentiful and cheap in Colombia, and the climate rendering but little clothing necessary, the labouring classes are enabled to support themselves and their families on very moderate wages: in the interior, labourers may be procured at a real (about sixpence sterling) per day; on the coast the usual price for field labour is two reals, and in the commercial cities from three to four reals per day. It has been before remarked, that the agriculture of the country has suffered greatly from the depopulation occasioned by the war: a few years of repose will repair this loss numerically; but it has unfortunately happened that the injury sustained has been greater in the quality than in the number of those who have been thus swept away, for the negroes and their descendants, whether slaves or free, were by far the most active and industrious of the labouring population; but

as they likewise formed the best soldiers, and were always taken for the service in preference to the Indians, a much greater proportion of this race than of any other has been destroyed during the revolution.

Notwithstanding the natural advantages of Colombia, its agriculture is still in an infant state, and nothing can be conceived more barbarous than the mode in which the greater part of its operations are carried on. Under the dominion of the Spaniards, so far from receiving any encouragement, it was fettered by the restrictions and imposts which characterized their system of colonial government; but it might have been expected that, at the revolution, so important a source of national wealth would have been delivered from the burdens which had so long retarded its improvement: few of them, however, have as yet been removed, although in every law which bears at all upon this subject, the legislature expatiates on the necessity of adopting measures for that purpose.

The obnoxious parts of the Spanish system which have been retained, and press with particular severity upon this branch of national industry, are the ecclesiastical tithe, the Alcabala duty, and the duties on exports: the two last of these have indeed been modified and reduced;

but the first still bears upon agriculture with all its oppressive weight. In countries more advanced in civilization and more fully populated—where all the lands worth cultivation are appropriated, and have acquired a value, which enables them to produce a rent—tithe may be considered as forming a part of the rental, and as being only a deduction from the income of the landlord; but in a country, in which uncultivated land is so plentiful and cheap as in Colombia, and where cultivated lands are scarcely capable of affording any rent, the value of the raw produce consists in that of the labour and capital employed in raising it; together with the ordinary profit upon the latter, which would be afforded by any other mode of its application. This burden must, therefore, necessarily enhance the value of all produce, or diminish the profits of the capital employed in its production, and in the latter case, it will effectually deter capitalists from engaging in agricultural pursuits. If it causes an increase of price, its effects, in articles which are grown for home consumption, may indeed be diffused over all classes of the community, and will so far answer the purposes for which it was imposed: but in agricultural productions grown for exportation, which constitute the most valuable part of those of Colombia, it will endanger the very existence of the

export trade; for unless counterbalanced by extraordinary natural advantages, it must effectually prevent them from entering into competition with the produce of countries free from this impost.

The objections to this obnoxious tax are also increased in Colombia, by the circumstance of scarcely any part of this revenue being applied to the support of the parochial clergy, who are maintained by the fees exacted for the performance of the baptismal, matrimonial, and funeral services, and those other rites which are peculiar to the Roman Catholic church. These fees are very exorbitant. The charge for a baptism, is from one to four dollars; for a marriage, from twelve to two hundred dollars, according to the rank or wealth of the parties, but I have known persons in very inferior stations of life, pay as much as fifty dollars: for a burial, the charge to the poorest person, is four dollars, for one of ordinary decency, from forty to fifty dollars is demanded, and the affluent pay, from three to four hundred dollars for this last service of the church: the charge for an ordinary mass, is one dollar, and the price increases in proportion to the urgency of the case. A part of the tithe is taken by the government, as a sort of direct contribution, which amounted, last year, to 135,573 dollars; and the remainder forms a provision for

the bishops and other dignitaries of the cathedral churches.

The Alcabala duty, although greatly reduced since the revolution, is still retained upon all sales of real property, and, operating as a check upon its transfer, tends to diminish the activity of agricultural speculation. The export duties, likewise, press heavily on those agricultural productions which are still subject to them. The first laws which were passed for their regulation after the revolution, levied a duty on the export of nearly all the productions of the soil; but the government seems to have discovered, that it was pursuing an erroneous course, and by the act of last session,* the greater part of them were exempted from its operation. With respect to cacao, as Colombia almost enjoys a monopoly in the supply of Europe with that article, and the provinces of Goatemala, in which it is grown, are so much less favourably situated for its exportation—this duty may perhaps be continued, without material injury to that branch of agriculture; but its indigo trade already finds, as explained under that head, sufficient difficulty in maintaining itself against the rivalry with which it has to contend without this additional burden, and the produce of its immense pastures, which, with proper

* Vide p. 160.

encouragement, would be a mine of wealth, more valuable than the metallic treasures of its mountains, sensibly feels the paralyzing effects of these impolitic restrictions on the freedom of its export.

A very liberal view was taken of these subjects by the minister of finance, in his last report to the legislative bodies; and he particularly insisted on the necessity of relieving agriculture from all these burdens. The alteration in the export duties was made in consequence of his representations, and a prospect was held out of their total repeal; but the legislature showed the same unwillingness to interfere with ecclesiastical affairs, as has ever hitherto marked its proceedings. Some trifling exemptions have, indeed, been granted to lands newly brought into cultivation; plantations of cacao for instance, under those circumstances, are exempt from tithe for ten years; those of coffee, for seven; and those of indigo, for five years; but these insignificant concessions, so far from affording any effectual remedy, seem rather to evince a determination to perpetuate the evil.

CHAPTER VI.

Mineral productions of Colombia—Gold—Silver—Platina—Mercury—Copper—Lead—Iron—Coal—Rock-salt—Mining Companies: Bolivar—Colombian—Carthagena and Anglo-Colombian—Pearl fishery—Conclusion.

The riches of the mineral kingdom in Colombia are deposited in the three great chains of the Cordilleras, which, throughout their extent, teem with metallic wealth, and, in many parts, cover the surface of the adjacent valleys with the precious products of their decomposition. Although these mountains have been, as yet, but imperfectly explored, they have already yielded gold, silver, platina, mercury, copper, lead, iron, coal, and rock-salt: with the exception, however, of the copper from the mines of Aroa, those only of the metallic substances which are distinguished by the name of precious metals, have been hitherto extracted from them in any quantity; for it formed no part of the system of the Spaniards to encourage the search for those materials which would have promoted or assisted the industry of the native, or afforded him the means of defence against their power.

The mineral wealth of Colombia is confined almost entirely to that part of it which composed the ancient vice-royalty of New Granada, the copper of Aroa being the only metallic produce which has of late years been afforded by Venezuela; for although, immediately after the conquest, gold was procured at Barquisimeto, and other places in the mountains, to the north-east of the Nevadas of Merida, as well as in those to the south of Caraccas, the workings or washings in those districts have been long discontinued, as the quantity of metal procured from them was insufficient to defray the expenses of its extraction.

The greater part of the gold of Colombia is now procured from the valleys or ravines in the mountainous region of Antioquia; the valley of Cauca between the central and western Cordillera, particularly in the province of Popayan at its southern extremity; the province of Chocó situated between the western Cordillera and the Pacific Ocean; and that part of the eastern Cordillera which forms the province of Pamplona. The province of Chocó affords, in proportion to its extent, a greater quantity of this metal than any other part of the world: it is there found in the plains at a very inconsiderable elevation above the level of the sea, and in the beds of most of its rivers. The gold procured from the metalliferous

district of Pamplona, which is particularly celebrated, both for the abundance and the variety of its mineral produce, is of a very superior quality; that extracted from the sand forming the bed of the river Canaverales, near Giron, being of the unusual fineness of twenty-three carats.

The gold of Colombia is not obtained by the usual processes of mining, but from the washing of an auriferous soil, through which minute particles of this metal are disseminated in a greater or less proportion in almost every part of the above-mentioned districts. By the word "Mine" therefore, in its acceptation in those countries, is frequently understood, a tract of land, the surface of which is composed of this auriferous soil, and which has either a natural stream running through it, or the capability of having water turned into it, to enable the labourer to perform his operations.

Previous to the revolution, the greater part of the gold was procured by the labour of slaves: in Antioquia there were nearly five thousand employed in this occupation; in Chocó, three thousand, and in the Valley of Cauca eight thousand; but the causes which have been described as having affected the quantity of the agricultural productions raised by the labour of this unfortunate race, operated in a still greater degree to diminish that of the gold which has been procured

since the war. The Indians are, indeed, equally skilful in their performance of this work: but as their labour is voluntary, the supply of gold is now dependent upon their caprice or inclination to work; and is by no means so large or so regular as it used to be, although the government have endeavoured to encourage their application to this pursuit, by remitting the tax which was formerly imposed upon all persons engaged in this occupation.

The spots formerly most productive of gold were the small pools formed amongst the rapids of the mountain-torrents, whither the auriferous material had been carried and deposited by the stream; but these little receptacles of metallic treasure having been long since explored and exhausted, this natural process is now imitated by artificial means. A piece of ground being fixed upon, the surface of which has the requisite degree of inclination, and is considered as being sufficiently rich in metal to pay for the labour of working, small channels are cut through it, into which water is led, and dams of a few inches in height erected across them at intervals: the earth is then scraped to the depth of two or three inches, from the surface on either side of the channels into these artificial rivulets, which are kept in constant agitation, and in the course of the water towards

the dams, the heavier substances, falling sooner from suspension, are deposited above them, whilst the lighter and more worthless particles are carried with the water over their tops; a sediment is thus formed, sufficiently rich to allow the labourer to commence the operation by which the metal is procured in a pure state. For this purpose the soil thus collected is placed in a wooden tub (*batea*) of five or six feet in diameter, and about six inches deep, and mixed with a sufficient quantity of water to bring it into the semi-liquid state, which is in Spanish called *Mazamorra*, from whence the gold-washers have obtained the name of *Mazamorreros*; the whole is then carefully turned over by the hand, and the earthy particles being separated from the metal and thrown out of the *batea*, more water is added, and the operation repeated, till at length the grains of gold are entirely freed from the earth, and left alone at the bottom, forming the gold-dust of commerce: this is a nice operation, and requires an experienced hand to perform it with success, for so minute are the particles of gold, that great care is necessary to prevent them from passing off with the earth and water.

Gold-washing is not a very laborious operation, nor is it in itself by any means destructive of health; but unfortunately the soil best calculated to remunerate the labourer for his exertions, is

frequently found in the most barren and unhealthy situations in the country: such are the mountainous regions of Antioquia, and the whole province of Chocó, where, owing to the constant humidity of the climate, and the obstacles opposed by the difficulty of transport to the introduction of provisions, all the necessaries of life are so scarce and dear, that the persons engaged in this pursuit can barely procure the means of subsistence. Sometimes, indeed, they are fortunate enough to fall in with nodules of pure gold of considerable size, or to hit upon tracts of land which afford them comparative riches, but in general the gold-washers in those districts have the appearance of the most abject misery I have ever beheld.

Humboldt says, "Le pays le plus riche en or est celui où la disette se fait continuellement sentir;"* there are, however, auriferous districts in Colombia to which this remark is not applicable, for in the valley of Cauca, and the province of Pamplona, the gold-washers do not experience this hardship, the climate of those places being much drier and more healthy, and provisions very abundant.

From the frequent occurrence of a soil so richly impregnated with particles of gold, in the vallies whose surface is formed from the detritus of the

* Essai Politique sur la Nouvelle Espagne, l. 4, chap. 11.

neighbouring mountains, geologists will, perhaps, conclude, that the mountains themselves abound in veins of the same metal. Mines of gold, if the trifling excavations on the mountains which have been hitherto made deserve the name, have indeed been discovered in several parts of the Cordillera, and their contents extracted to undergo the process of washing; but they have not been followed to a greater distance than from fifty to one hundred yards within the bowels of the earth; and the experiments of this nature which have been hitherto attempted, do not seem to have determined whether these are indications of real veins which would repay the expense of pursuing them to greater depths, and procuring the metal by the means which modern science and ingenuity have discovered, or whether they are not rather accumulations of auriferous matter in the interstices of the rocks, on what, compared with the immense width of their bases, may be considered as the surface of the mountains, and which have not sufficient continuity to lead the miner to any considerable deposite of metallic treasure within their bosoms. I am inclined to think that the latter supposition will be found the most correct, and that this precious treasure, which in so many instances presents itself spontaneously on the surface of the earth to the notice of man, will not

be found in its interior in sufficient quantity to repay his more laborious search.

In the years immediately preceding the revolution, the value of the gold annually procured from the washings in New Granada, amounted to three millions of dollars, and the quint or part claimed by the government afforded a revenue of 60,000 dollars; the new government retains the claim of the quint, which last year produced 32,747 dollars, but the minister anticipates for the present year an improvement in this branch of the revenue, from the operations now carrying on, which will raise it to 50,000 dollars.

Silver is found in many parts of Colombia, but it has not yet been procured in the same abundance as gold, nor will the argentiferous mines of that country bear any comparison with those of Mexico or Peru: so little, however, is yet known of the extent of its mountain treasures, that it would be premature to determine whether this inferiority in the quantity of its produce of silver is to be attributed to the poverty of its mines, the defective manner in which they have been worked, or the carelessness induced by the superior degree of facility with which the more precious metal has been procured in that country.

Mines of silver had been discovered in the time of the Spaniards, in the provinces of Mariquita

and Pamplona, and in the valley of Cauca: in the first of those situations, the mines of Santa Anna and La Manta were worked at an early period, and had acquired some celebrity; but the quantity of silver extracted from them seems to have been inconsiderable, for it is an article scarcely ever mentioned in any statement of the revenue or exports of New Granada. Humboldt, whose observations, always correct and valuable, deserve, on subjects connected with mining, a more particular attention, in speaking of La Manta, says, "Les travaux y ont été dirigés avec beaucoup d'intelligence; mais comme la quantité d'argent ne montoit de 1791 à 1797 qu'à 8,700 marcs (78,000 piastres), tandis que les frais s'élevoient à 216,000 piastres, le viceroi ordonna d'abandonner la mine."*

Several other mines of silver were likewise worked in Mariquita, but, from their abandonment, it may be supposed they afforded little better success; if, however, by the application of mechanical and hydraulic science, or by the discovery of new and more prolific veins, of which the existence is rendered probable by the indications of metallic wealth already afforded, the mines of this province can be rendered productive, there is no situation, either in any other part of South America,

* Essai Politique sur la Nouvelle Espagne, l. 4. chap. 11.

or in Mexico, so favourable to the operations of mining, on an extensive scale, as Mariquita, which, forming one of the banks of the river Magdalena at the highest point to which its navigation extends, enjoys facilities of receiving machinery and other supplies for the working of its mines, as well as of exporting their produce, which are wanting to most of the other mining districts on the American continent. The climate of this province is likewise temperate, and the country in the vicinity of the mines fertile and productive.

The mines of silver in the province of Pamplona are under circumstances somewhat similar to those of Mariquita; their situation is, however, sufficiently advantageous, as well with respect to climate and fertility of country, as to communication with the coast: for the greater part of the province of Pamplona is a *tierra fria*, without rising to an elevation unfavourable to agricultural productions; and the river Zulia, which falls into the lagoon of Maracaybo, takes its rise in the mountains in which they are situated, and becomes navigable at no great distance from their base.

But the richest silver mines, which have been hitherto discovered in Colombia, are those situated in the Vega de Supia, towards the northern extremity of the valley of Cauca. Their existence was unknown till towards the end of the last cen-

tury, and they have as yet been very imperfectly worked; their ore is however said to be extremely rich, and, as is frequently the case in silver mines, they yield likewise a portion of gold, but of an inferior quality. The mine of Cachafruta, one of the richest of the group, had been worked to the depth of fifty yards, when the water came in upon it and put a stop to the further progress of the work. These mines are the property of individuals who did not possess the means of procuring machinery to drain them, or of carrying on the operations necessary for the extraction of the ore; but being now in the hands of persons who do not labour under this disadvantage, much might be expected from them, were they in a more accessible situation; it is, however, to be feared, that the difficulty of passing the mountains, which on every side inclose the valley of Cauca, will oppose insurmountable obstacles to their being worked with advantage. Within the valley itself every circumstance is favourable to the undertaking;—provisions are abundant, and labourers may be procured at very low wages; but if it is found necessary or desirable to introduce European workmen, there will be considerable difficulty in getting them across the summit of the Cordillera; and the transport of any machinery which cannot be divided into parts not exceeding 150 lbs. in weight, is

absolutely impossible. The annual quint of the silver procured from the mines of Colombia, in the years immediately preceding the revolution, did not amount to more than 201 dollars.

The following table, extracted from the "Essai Politique sur le Royaume de la Nouvelle Espagne" of M. de Humboldt, will show the annual produce of the gold and silver mines of the American continent, at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

	Gold.	Silver.
Mexico, including Goatemala,	7,000 marcs*	2,338,220 marcs
Peru	3,400	611,090
Chili	12,212	29,700
Buenos Ayres	2,200	481,830
New Granada	20,505	but little
Brazil	29,090	none

The metallic wealth of Buenos Ayres was, at that time, derived principally from those provinces which have, since the revolution, been separated from it, and now form part of the republic of Bolivia, or Upper Peru.

Platina is procured from that part of the province of Chocó which is situated between the western Cordillera and the Pacific Ocean, and on the coast of the Pacific as far to the southward as Barbacoas, and is found scarcely in any other part of the world; it accompanies the gold, and is obtained in the washings for that metal, from

* The marc of gold is worth about 136 dollars; that of silver eight and a half.

which it is afterwards separated. It is difficult to ascertain the quantity of this metal afforded by that district, as the greater part of it is conveyed clandestinely out of the country. On the establishment of the present government, a law was passed prohibiting the exportation of platina, and providing for a coinage of that metal. By this act, the government constituted itself the purchaser of all the platina procured from the mines, at the rate of from four to eight dollars a pound in its crude state; and, after it had undergone the process of refining, it was proposed to issue it in a coinage, at the rate of four dollars the ounce. This scheme was, however, never put into execution, principally owing to the small quantity of the metal which came into the hands of the government; for, in consequence of the much better price it fetched in Jamaica, it, as might have been expected, found its way down the river Atrato, and was smuggled over to that island. A late decree has endeavoured to enforce this law, and establish a monopoly of the sale of this article; for the government has itself now determined to export it, when purified and marked with its arms, at the price of six dollars an ounce; but, notwithstanding that nature has granted a monopoly of this produce to Colombia, it may not be found so easy a matter to stamp it with this arbitrary value.

Cinnabar, the ore of mercury, has been discovered in three different places in Colombia; and although the mines containing this mineral are not at present worked, their existence may become a subject of importance, if the silver mines, which it is now proposed to bring into operation, yield a sufficient quantity of ore to induce the parties engaged in those undertakings, to adopt the processes of amalgamation for the extraction of the metal. This mineral is found in the valley of Santa Rosa, in the province of Antioquia; in the central Cordillera, near the passage of Quindiu, between Ibague and Cartago; and at the Villa de Azogue, near the city of Cuença. At this latter place, there are indications of extensive works having been formerly carried on; but they were abandoned at an early period in consequence, as it is supposed, of the discovery of the great mine of Huancavelica in Peru, which has long supplied the silver mines of that country with the mercury they have required. If the mine of mercury in the mountains of Quindiu can be worked to advantage, it is well situated for the supply of the silver mines, both of Mariquita and the Vale of Supia, and will prevent them from being dependent on other countries for an article so essential to their operations.

Native mercury has likewise been occasionally

met with in different parts of the country; and the attention of the Spanish government was excited by the prospect afforded by such discoveries, of procuring, within its American possessions, an article so necessary for the extraction of their metallic wealth; and of which, notwithstanding the large supply obtained from Spain itself, they were obliged to import a considerable quantity from the mines of Hungary. Its researches, however, were not attended with success, as the masses of this metal, whose discovery had raised these expectations, seem to have been nothing more than insignificant formations occasioned by infiltration, in situations where the metal had been accidentally spilt, or where it had been deposited in its transport from the coast to the place of its destination, during the long period that the mines of those countries have been worked by the processes in which its agency is required.

The principal copper mines of Colombia are those of Aroa and Moniquera, both of which are situated in the eastern Cordillera; the first, near its northern extremity, in the province of Carabobo; and the latter, in the mountains, to the north of Tunja. There are indications of copper in other parts of the Cordillera, particularly in the province of Pamplona; but I am not aware that any other mines of this metal have been

worked. The mines of Aroa form part of the patrimonial estate of Bolivar, and have been long celebrated for the richness of their ore, and the superior quality of the metal it affords; which, previous to the revolution, besides supplying the consumption of the country, formed a considerable article in the export trade of Venezuela. The mine of Moniquera has been hitherto very feebly worked, and its produce is scarcely sufficient to supply the inconsiderable demand of the surrounding country; but even if an increase of capital was employed to render it more productive, its distance from any navigation would not allow the copper of this mine to come in competition, in foreign markets, with that of others which are more favourably situated.

Lead has been discovered in various parts of the eastern Cordillera; but the only mine of this metal which has been worked with any effect is that of Sogamoso; and even there, although the ore is sufficiently rich, the methods employed to extract the metal are so imperfect, that the profits are not sufficient to induce the persons employed in it to pursue the occupation with much activity.

Iron ore is likewise found in abundance in the mountainous country bordering on the plain of Bogotá; but under the Spanish government, that useful mineral was utterly neglected; and al-

though, since the revolution, some attempts at smelting it have been made by foreigners, they have not yet succeeded in procuring any considerable quantity of the metal. The plain of Bogotá abounds also in pit-coal, a mineral of rare occurrence in the countries traversed by the Cordilleras of the Andes, and the great mountain-chains which branch from them; but it is held in little estimation by the inhabitants, and is only used in their smithies. These two last-mentioned minerals, however, neglected as they are by the present race, may, at no very distant period, produce a more important change in the habits and condition of the inhabitants of the *tierras frias* of Colombia, and contribute more to their advance in civilisation than all the other mineral productions of the country.

The celebrated salt-mines of Cipaquirá, Tauza, and Enemocon, situated in the mountains to the north east of Bogotá, belong to the government; they supply all the surrounding country to a very considerable distance with this essential article; and yield a considerable revenue to the state. The salt of these mines is, in its native state, exactly similar to the rock-salt of Cheshire, and is purified by the same method; for, although these mines are so much nearer the equator than the salt-works of the Punta de Araya, and the Playa of Santa

Martha, the sun's rays have not, at the elevation at which they are situated, sufficient power to produce the requisite evaporation; and it is necessary to have recourse to fire for that purpose.

About three years since, the government let these mines for one hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year to an English gentleman of the name of Thomson, who engaged to improve and enlarge the works within a given time. He returned to England for the purpose of making the necessary arrangements for entering into the concern; but, owing to some misunderstanding with the Colombian government, or its agents, respecting the payment of the first deposits, the stipulated time elapsed before he had the opportunity of fulfilling his engagement, and the contract was declared void. Mr. Thomson, therefore, lost the advantages which he expected to derive from this undertaking; and as the government have never hitherto made, of all the salt-works in the country, a sum much exceeding the rent which he was to have given for these mines, it appears to have suffered equally from its not having been carried into execution.

There are, likewise, several salt-springs which derive their source from the mountains in which these mines are situated, and break out in different places in their vicinity, from which a considerable

quantity of salt is procured: the principal of these are the springs of Yousa, which furnish annually between six and seven thousand quintals of that article. When Colombia can form a navy, the mines and springs of Cipaquirá will acquire additional importance; for, as the plains in their vicinity abound with cattle, and the temperature is suitable to the salting of meat, the government will be enabled to victual its ships at a cheap rate from the produce of its own soil, instead of being dependent, as at present, on foreign supply for every article of provision which they carry to sea.

The revolution in the Spanish Americas, by removing the barrier which had so long prevented the entrance of foreigners into those forbidden regions, opened a new field of enterprise to the British capitalist, into which he rushed with an eagerness unparalleled in the annals of speculation.

The metallic treasure of those countries formed the principal object of attraction; and no sooner was it understood that their mines were rendered unproductive by the want of funds to carry on the operations necessary for the extraction of their riches, and that persons who possessed the means of supplying that deficiency would be admitted to a participation in their wealth, than mining adventures of every description were projected and

entered upon with an avidity which the whole treasure of the western world seemed insufficient to satisfy. No less than twelve different companies were formed for this purpose within a year, whose capital amounted on an average to one million sterling each; and such has been either the liberality of their offers, or the necessities of the owners of that description of property, that there is scarcely a single mine of silver, throughout the extent of the late colonies of Spain, which either has been, or is expected to be, productive of metal, which has not been engaged by one or other of these associations.

In the first moments of excitement caused by the prospect of this sudden influx of wealth, some of these undertakings were entered upon without due consideration of their uncertainty, or of the difficulties which would attend their execution, and they have necessarily failed of success. This may be one of the causes of the violent re-action which has threatened the whole of these schemes with destruction; but it must be likewise in a great measure attributed to the number of persons who made use of the shares in these concerns as the means of temporary speculations, without any intention of really embarking in them; and who, having become involuntary holders in consequence of the check upon the facility of disposing of their

shares, preferred the loss of the capital already advanced to any further risk.

It is one of the great advantages of associations of this nature, that precarious projects, which can only be carried on with prospect of success by a large capital, may be engaged in at small individual risk; and it might be supposed that the generality of mankind would be so well acquainted with the hazard attending all mining speculations, that they would not engage in them so deeply as to be seriously affected, even if the whole amount for which they rendered themselves liable were called for. It has been, therefore, a hardship on those persons who engaged in these undertakings with a bonâ fide intention of carrying them into effect, that, by the secession of others, they should have been obliged to embark a larger sum in them than they originally calculated upon, in order to prevent the entire loss of the money already advanced. It certainly cannot be considered that any of those American mining companies, which founded their operations on mines of silver formerly celebrated for their produce, have as yet failed of success. The expenses of draining and putting the mines into the state of repair necessary to enable them to recommence the workings, have, perhaps, been greater, and occupied a longer time, than had been anticipated; but, till these

preliminary steps have been taken, and the vein of ore again attacked, it is premature to judge of the result.

Colombia has had its full share of these companies; the operations of "the Bolivar," "the Colombian," "the Carthagena and Anglo-Colombian" mining associations, and of the "Colombian Pearl Fishery" association being all confined to that country, as well as those of another more select association, which as yet has published no prospectus and sold no shares, but whose members engage in the undertaking at their own expense and risk.

The "Bolivar Mining Association" was established with the object of working the copper mines of Aroa, situated in the province of Carabobo, at the northern extremity of the eastern Cordillera. These mines belong, as before stated, to Bolivar, of whom they are held on lease for the term of nine years, from October, 1824, which the trustees are authorised by the deed to renew or extend at their discretion. The capital of the company is 500,000*l.*, divided into ten thousand shares of fifty pounds each. This association has sent out some miners from England, who have been at work for some time on the mine; but although the ore is particularly rich, and procured with facility, they have not yet succeeded in ex-

tracting a great quantity of the metal, owing, I understand, to the difficulty they have experienced in smelting the ore ; but as that obstacle has been removed by some arrangements made in this country, the concern may be expected to assume a better aspect. The country in the vicinity of these mines is the richest and most populous of any in Colombia, and affords an abundant supply of all the necessaries of life : their situation is likewise extremely favourable for the exportation of their produce, the valley of Aroa lying at a short distance from the coast, to the south of Porto Cabello, and a road having been formed from the mines to that port.

Captain C. S. Cochrane, of the royal navy, who travelled in Colombia in the year 1823, and took an extensive survey of its mineral productions, obtained, during the session of Congress of that year, an exclusive privilege for the erection and use of machinery for the rolling of copper, on the coast of Colombia, from the mouths of the Orinoco to the gulph of Maracaybo. Had he formed such an establishment, it might have greatly benefited these mines ; but the project appears to have been abandoned, as, since his return to England, he has taken no steps to carry it into execution.

The " Colombian Mining Association" has more extensive objects in view, having been formed for

the general purpose of working mines of every description in Colombia or any other part of Spanish America: its capital is 1,000,000*l.* sterling, divided into ten thousand shares of 100*l.* each. This company seems at present to be directing its attention principally to silver, having engaged the four principal mines of that metal in the province of Mariquita, viz. those of Santa Anna, La Manta, San Juan, and Santo Christo de las Lajas, which are the property of the government; it has likewise taken other mines belonging to individuals in different parts of the country. Some gentlemen of distinguished scientific acquirements have been for some time employed by the association in the survey of the principal mining districts of Colombia; and between one and two hundred English miners, with some machinery, have been sent out to conduct the works. They have commenced their operations on some of the old mines in the province of Mariquita, and have already made such progress in clearing out the former workings as to have reached the veins of ore. The government have evinced every disposition to encourage and support these undertakings; it is indeed greatly interested in their success, for the rent of such mines as are its property is paid by a per centage on the produce, and it receives the quint upon all the metal

extracted from those which belong to private individuals.

From what has been already said respecting the method of procuring gold in Colombia, it may be conjectured that, unless the agents of the association are lucky enough to meet with veins of that metal, differently circumstanced from those already discovered, European machinery and skill will be of little avail in its extraction, and that it must still be left to the patient industry of the natives. With respect to silver, whatever may be found to be the real state of the mines formerly worked by the Spaniards, it may be reasonably expected, that in districts where there are so many indications of veins of that metal, as are found in Mariquita and Pamplona, some will be fallen in with, sufficiently rich to repay the expenses incurred in this undertaking, and remunerate the parties engaged in it: if they are so fortunate as to succeed in making such a discovery, the fertility of those provinces, and their contiguity to navigable streams, will enable the Company to carry on its works at much less expense than can be done by any establishment of this description, either in Mexico or Peru; in which countries none of the mining districts enjoy similar advantages.

A grant having been made by the government

of Colombia of all the mines of gold, silver, platina, and copper, belonging to it in the province of Carthagena, a company has been formed, with the title of the "Carthagena and Anglo-Colombian Mining Association," for the purpose of deriving from it such benefit as it may afford. Its capital is to be 1,500,000*l.*, divided into 15,000 shares, of 100*l.* each; but there has not yet been much progress made, in carrying into execution the objects it has in view. The metalliferous district of the province of Carthagena is situated in the mountains on its western border, adjacent to the province of Antioquia; and in the prolongation of the central Cordillera, in its extension from the group of Antioquia to Sinú, on the coast of the Caribbean sea. Gold has been formerly procured at Simití, Guamocó, and other parts of this line, but I have never heard that it affords any other metallic product.

In the session of congress of 1823, an exclusive privilege was granted to Messrs. Rundell, Bridge, and Rundell, of London, to fish for pearl oysters, with machinery, on certain parts of the coast of Colombia. There are three situations in the seas washing the shores of that country, where these oysters are found, two of which are in the Atlantic Ocean, and one in the Pacific: of those in the Atlantic, one is on the coast included between

the mouths of the Orinoco and Cumaná, comprehending the shores of the islands of Margarita, Cubagua, and Coche; and the other, on the coast of Rio Hacha: that in the Pacific, is at Panamá and the adjacent coast. In the sixteenth century, the pearl fishery, at the first of these places, was carried on with great activity; and for some years, the value of the pearls annually obtained from it amounted to half a million of dollars; but it appears to have been early exhausted, for it soon declined, and has long since altogether ceased. Of late years, the only fisheries which have been carried on, are those on the coast of Rio Hacha, and in the bay of Panamá, where valuable pearls have occasionally been found by the divers.

The grant to Messrs. Rundell, Bridge, and Co. secured to them, for ten years, the monopoly of fishing with machinery (not, however, to exclude the natives from fishing as they had been accustomed to do) on the coast of Cumaná, and in the bay of Panamá, on condition of their ceding to the government one-fifth part of the pearls they might procure, and of their leaving, at the expiration of the term, all the machinery employed by them, in the hands of the government: they likewise engaged to employ a certain number of natives on board their vessels, for the purpose of instructing them in the use of the machinery. On

the Atlantic coast, they were restricted to fish, for the first five years, from the North-west Cape to Cape Roman; and for the second five, from Cape Roman to the Orinoco: on the Pacific, for the first five years, from the North-east Cape, to Cape Corrientes: and for the other five, from Cape Corrientes to Cape Blanco.

For the purpose of fulfilling the stipulations of their contract, Messrs. Rundell, Bridge, and Co. formed an association, called the "Colombian Pearl Fishery Association," the capital-stock of which was divided into 25,000 shares, at twenty-five pounds a share; on which each subscriber paid, on subscribing, a deposit of two pounds. The contractors offered to the public, 8,000 of these shares, at a premium of ten pounds per share, 12,500 of the remaining shares being reserved for the original contractors, and the other 4,500 for the directors and officers of the Association. The premium, upon the shares offered to the public, was paid at the time of subscribing, and one moiety of it vested in government securities, to be returned to the holders of shares, in the event of the failure of the scheme. The scheme was to be considered as having failed, if the sum of 125,000*l.* was not divided amongst the shareholders from the proceeds of the fishery; but if such sum was shared amongst them, then

the moiety, so vested, was to become the absolute property of the original contractors; and till it thus became their property, or was returned to the shareholders, the contractors were to receive, for their absolute benefit, the interest accruing upon it.

Two ships have been fitted out, the one for the Atlantic, the other for the Pacific fishery, and provided with diving-bells, and other necessary apparatus: they have now been for some months upon the fishing ground, but have not hitherto been able to procure any pearls of value; and as their machinery, from which so much was expected, has been so long employed without success, it is to be feared that this will not prove a very lucrative concern, at least to the shareholders.

During the latter part of the time that the countries, whose productions have been enumerated in this and the preceding chapter, were dependent colonies, and whilst their industry was repressed by the prohibitory system, and other errors of the Spanish government, the produce raised from them afforded, in addition to the supply of their own population, an annual surplus for exportation, the value of which amounted, according to the statements of M. de Humboldt, to between eleven and twelve millions of dollars; but their produce at a time when so little encou-

ragement was given to their agriculture, and such severe restrictions were imposed upon their commerce, cannot be considered as indicative of the extent of their natural resources.

The debilitated state in which Colombia was left by the revolutionary contest, combined with other causes which have been detailed in different parts of the preceding pages, have indeed occasioned her, since that period, to retrograde rather than advance in most branches of her national industry; but it may be confidently expected, that the vigour infused into her maritime cities by freedom of commerce, and the circulation of capital through the country, by the different enterprises undertaken by associations and individuals, will give such an impulse to her population, as may be felt in every branch of her industrial economy, and enable her to avail herself of the peculiar advantages afforded by the happy variety of her soil and climate, and the favourable position she holds for the establishment of commercial relations with every part of the globe. When these stimulants shall have excited her productive powers to their proper action, she may hope soon to acquire the means of re-establishing that confidence in her resources and honour which she inspired, and from which she derived such beneficial effects in the dawn of her independence;

but till she is thus able to wipe off the present stain upon her credit, she cannot expect to regain the leading station which she is entitled by her natural advantages to hold amongst the newly-established states of the American continent: for the opinion entertained in Europe of the solvency and stability of each of those states, will tend very materially to influence their relative position in the scale of political importance.

If the comparative value of the public securities of those countries is to be considered as a criterion of this opinion, Colombia certainly does not at present stand in very high repute: nothing, however, but internal dissensions or gross mismanagement of her resources can long keep her in this state of depression; for although Mexico and Peru may surpass her in metallic, and Buenos Ayres in pastoral wealth, she ranks next to those states in the produce which forms the principal, or indeed, if we except the cochineal of Mexico, the only articles which they supply in any quantity for exportation; and she is as much superior to them all in the variety and amount of her productions, as in the advantages afforded for their exportation, from every part of her territory, by her numerous ports, and extensive lines of inland navigation.

Mexico is the only one of the Spanish American

states which can at present pretend to rival Colombia; but although that country may contain within itself all the elements of internal prosperity, and by its metallic wealth may long possess the means of purchasing foreign luxuries, yet the want of navigable streams, and of a secure port on the coast through which it holds communication with Europe and the United States, will prevent it from ever becoming a commercial country of any importance. Colombia, on the contrary, possessing equal, if not superior internal means of aggrandisement, has likewise the advantages of an inland navigation, extending on the Orinoco and its tributary streams, the lake of Maracaybo and its rivers, the Magdalena, the Atrato, and the rivers falling into the Pacific, through a line of more than four thousand miles, penetrating in every direction to the very heart of the country,—and of a coast on the two oceans nearly seven hundred leagues in extent, studded with secure and capacious harbours, forming so many centres of commerce and civilisation, through which her inhabitants hold intercourse with the world, and exchange her territorial wealth for such productions of other countries, as either minister to her necessities, or supply her with the luxuries of life.

Colombia is, likewise, in proportion to her po-

pulation and extent, of much greater importance than Mexico, as a consumer of European manufactures; for the latter had, previous to the conquest, made considerable progress in the arts of civilized life, and was already an agricultural and manufacturing nation. In that country, as in Quito, Peru, and others in which the natives were found in similar circumstances, they have, ever since, continued to form the labouring population; and their inflexible character and attachment to their ancient habits and manners, have prevented any material change from taking place in their condition. To refer, therefore, to the observation already quoted, of M. de Pradt, "they are a population that have not acquired European habits;" and, therefore, Europe has less interest in them, than in those nations which, by the consumption of her manufactures, encourage that reciprocity of demand which is the foundation of commercial intercourse.

In Mexico, out of a gross population of six millions, one hundred and twenty thousand, the number of the Indian race amounts to three millions, seven hundred thousand, whilst in Colombia it does not exceed seven hundred and twenty thousand; and those only, of this number, who inhabit the elevated vallies of the Cordilleras are under circumstances similar to those of the aborigines of

Mexico: for the natives of the plains and coast were, when the Spaniards took possession of the country, in a state of complete barbarism, and not only entirely destitute of manufactures, but even ignorant of the most simple mechanical arts: the wants, therefore, generated by their advance in civilization, have been always supplied from the markets of Europe.

I know not whether the statements contained in the foregoing pages will induce any one to alter an opinion he might previously have formed of the state of Colombia; but I see no reason, either from a reconsideration of past events, or anticipation of the consequences of the present transactions in that country, to form a different conclusion from that which I have already expressed.

It must, indeed, be confessed, that the deficiency of the actual revenue, as compared with the estimated expenditure, is at first sight calculated to cause alarm; but a reference to what has been said concerning the different branches of the public service, and a comparison of the present state of the country with its circumstances at the time the estimate, which has excited such apprehensions, was made, will, I think, show that the government possesses the means of making such retrenchments

as will enable the revenue to cover its unavoidable expenses. Without entering into minute particulars, the expenditure may be divided into three parts; viz., that of the civil department of the government, comprising the interest of the debt; that of the army, and that of the navy. The first of these is calculated at 3,875,335 dollars, and the only diminution of which it would be capable is a reduction of the salaries of the civil officers of the state: such a measure might not be even necessary, but it has been already adopted several times since the establishment of the present government; and it may be instanced as a proof of the patriotic feeling of this class of the Colombian nation, that it has been always submitted to without a murmur.

The army estimate was made on the supposition of the necessity of keeping up the army to its full complement of thirty-three thousand men, arising from the continuance of the war in the south, and the threatened invasion of the country by the forces of Spain; but as all war in which Colombia was engaged within the South American continent is happily at an end, and every succeeding event which bears relation to the affairs of Spain increases the improbability of her being able again to engage in active hostilities in the Americas, the government of Colombia will be able to effect such

a reduction of its military force as may entirely relieve it from its financial embarrassments. The estimate for the navy supposed that all its vessels were kept in a complete state of equipment, and fit for immediate service: as, however, it is notorious, that, so far from this having been the case, scarcely one of them has been at sea during the year, this branch of expenditure has been necessarily curtailed; and if, as prudence would dictate, Colombia confines herself to the equipment of a few light vessels to prevent smuggling on her coasts, the expenses of her navy need not in future be very burdensome. The expenditure may, therefore, without difficulty, be reduced to a sum little exceeding her present means; and as an increase of commerce and extension of agriculture, with a proportionate improvement in the revenue, may be fairly anticipated, I see no reason to doubt her ability to meet all her pecuniary engagements.

The minister of finance has calculated, as has been before stated, upon a very rapid increase of the revenue; but even if his measures had not been thwarted by domestic dissensions, it may be doubted whether he would have found it so easy to realize his sanguine expectations: for the alterations in the different branches of the revenue by which he proposed partly to effect his purpose were rather a diminution than an increase of the

existing taxes; and although such a plan might be calculated eventually to benefit the country, it could not be expected suddenly to raise their amount. The expedient of adopting stronger measures for the prevention of smuggling, and other evasions of the different imposts, might, indeed, have been productive, not only of an immediate and considerable improvement in the revenue, but also of a salutary reform in their whole financial system; for, although the country certainly is not rich, it is inconceivable that so small a sum should be raised by such a burden of taxation; and it may be confidently asserted, that a great part of the embarrassment of the country has been occasioned by these abuses, which sap the very foundations of its strength, and which the executive evidently wants either the power or the energy to correct.

The apprehensions excited in the minds of the creditors of Colombia by the late political events, are, I think, still more groundless than those occasioned by her financial difficulties; for the conduct of those chiefs and public bodies who have expressed their dissatisfaction with the present form of government, has exhibited a degree of calmness and moderation which presents a striking contrast to the violence usually attendant on the ebullitions of political discontent, and indicates a

disposition to reconcile their differences by constitutional means, which affords a strong guarantee of their future tranquillity. It is, indeed, unfortunate that these disputes should have occurred at the moment of financial embarrassment, as they will, necessarily, have had a tendency to prevent the operation of the measures which the government had adopted for its relief: this, however, promises to be the extent of their ill consequences; but, whatever may be their result, whether the central form of government be exchanged for the federal, or both give way to the establishment of a dictatorship, under the less offensive title of a presidency for life, the spirit of the age seems to demand that the representative form of government should constitute the basis of power. The present constitution is not, therefore, likely to undergo any very material change; and it will be an important benefit if this opportunity be taken to remedy some of the defects by which it is now disfigured, and strengthen those parts of the government whose weakness and inefficiency have threatened its whole frame with dissolution.

Whatever dissensions, however, exist in Colombia, all parties agree in their expression of the necessity of a scrupulous observance of their foreign engagements; and if any additional as-

surance of security were requisite, it might be found in the character and sentiments of the chief, to whose arbitration they so unanimously refer their present differences, and whom they seem resolved to select as the ruler of their future destinies.

In the speech made by Bolivar, at the installation of the congress at Angostura in 1819, when he resigned the dictatorial authority with which he had been invested into the hands of a constitutional government, in speaking of the creditors of the republic, he thus expressed himself: "Those friends of mankind are the guardian genii of America, and to them we owe a debt of eternal gratitude, as well as a religious fulfilment of the several obligations contracted with them. The national debt, Legislators, is the deposit of the good faith, the honour, and the gratitude of Venezuela: respect it as the holy ark which encloses not only the rights of our benefactors, but the glory of our fidelity. Let us perish, rather than fail in any, the smallest point, connected with the completion of those engagements which have been the salvation of our country, and of the lives of her children." Every part of Bolivar's conduct, indeed, favours the supposition that he will, at the expense of every sacrifice preserve inviolate the

national faith of Colombia—it is a duty which he has, on all occasions, strenuously inculcated on his fellow-countrymen; and there is no reason to apprehend that he will himself swerve from the performance of it.

THE END.

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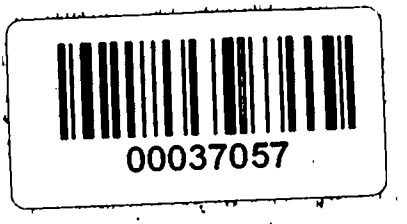
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